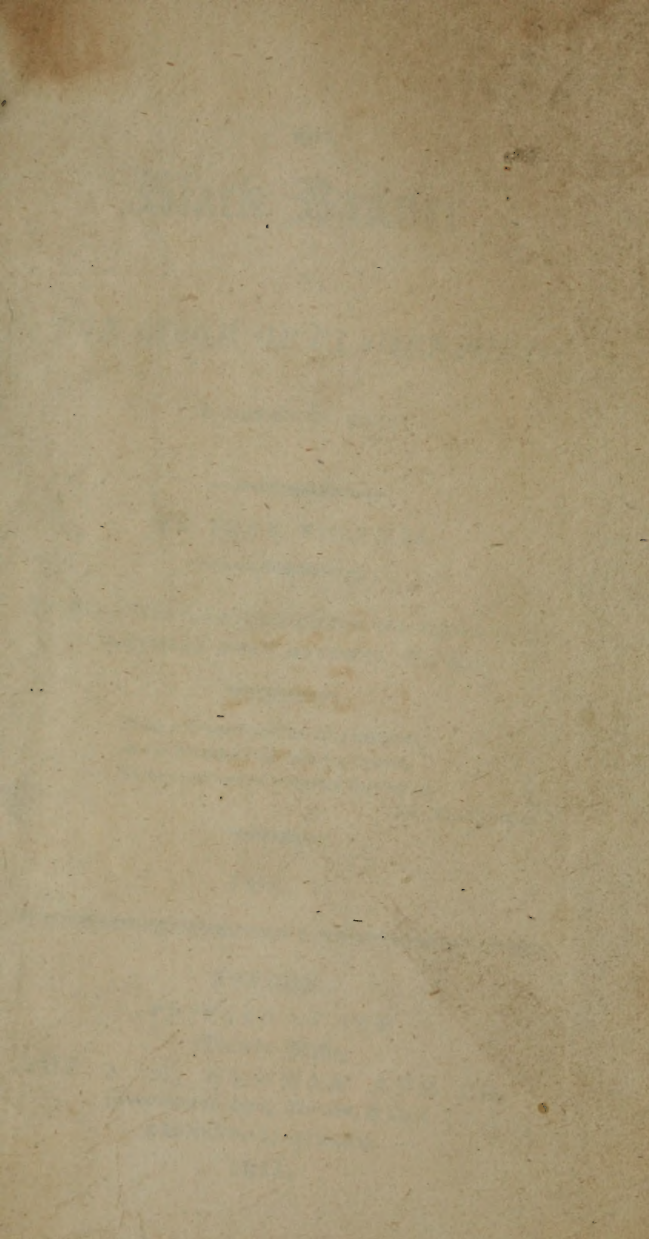


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THE
Black Banner ;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF CLAGENFURTH.

A ROMANTIC TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE BARON DE FALKENHEIM,
MYSTERY UPON MYSTERY, &c. &c.

Thrice is he arm'd that has his quarrel just,
And he but naked, tho' lock'd up in steel,
Whose conscience with injustice is corrupted.

SHAKESPEARE.

VOL. I.

LONDON :
PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Press,
FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.
(Successors to Lane, Newman, & Co.)
LEADENHALL-STREET.
1811.

THE

Black Banner:

OR

THE LIFE OF CLARENCE

A ROMANTIC TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE BARRON OF BIRKENHAM,
MYSTERY UPON MYSTERY, &c. &c.

There is no more to be said than that I have
and he has not said, the best of me is
I am convinced who he is a country.

CLARENCE

VOL. I.

LONDON:

PRINTED AT THE

Georgian Press,

FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.

(Successors to Long, Newman & Co.)

LEADENHALL-STREET.

1841.

823

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THE

BLACK BANNER.



THRICE croaked the raven on the battlements of Clagenfurth; and, expanding its dusky pinions wide in air, bent its flight to the left, while the anxious gazers followed the direction with palpitating hearts, until the distant horizon concealed its destination from their view.

Albert heard the sound as he sat absorbed in thought within the interior of the Castle; starting from the reverie in which he had indulged himself, he hastily snatched up his sword, and rushed through the corridor to the platform, where the troops and

VOL. I.

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vassals

28 Oct. 53. Clark.
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J. R. Ray

vassals were assembled, and were commenting on the portentous omen.

The sudden and disordered appearance of their Prince astonished the obsequious attendants; terror seemed depicted in his countenance; and while his haggard eye, rolling in frenzied motion, appeared to gaze on the vacant air, he abruptly demanded, if they had noticed the particular point to which the raven had directed its flight? Surprise, for a few moments, occasioned a total silence, until Albert, raising his voice, repeated the question, which was answered by one of his officers, who described the direction the bird had taken. The information seemed to encrease the terror which so visibly agitated the mind of their chief. Sounds unintelligible burst frequently from his lips, as with hasty and unequal steps he strode along the spacious platform, from whose commanding summit were observed, far as the eye could reach, the lofty hills of the Tyrolese, over which the ill-omened harbinger

ger appeared to have winged its flight, bending its course towards the interior of Switzerland ; when, as if suddenly recollecting himself, he commanded his vassals to their respective posts, and retracing his steps, again sought the retirement which he had so hastily quitted.

Superstition was the prominent characteristic of the age, from the effects of which, neither the prince nor the peasant was exempt ; it was ingrafted, as it were, in their existence, and encreased with their years, being constantly nurtured by the artifice and the policy of the priests.

Albert, although a warrior to whom fear was unknown, and whose daring mind defied the approach of death itself, arrayed in its most hideous forms, was nevertheless sensible of its powerful effects, and was anxious to dive into an explanation of those occurrences which this weakness of human nature rendered of consequence, sufficient to determine the actions of its votaries.

The entrance of Albert into the Castle and territories of Clagenfurth, had been marked by blood and desolation; the inhabitants of the former had chiefly perished in an indiscriminate slaughter, to which an obstinate, but unavailing resistance had subjected them. It was in vain that the reigning Prince of Clagenfurth endeavoured to animate his brave followers; the carnage which ensued on the sacking of the Castle, was executed with such malignant success, that few escaped the sword of the conqueror, and the Prince himself expired in the hall of his ancestors. The attack had been so sudden, and the subsequent evolutions of Albert so rapid, that the unfortunate Princess had scarcely time to effect her escape to a neighbouring convent. In that retreat, however, she was secure, as even the most ferocious victor dared not attempt a violation of its sanctity. To this asylum she had been hurried, by a confidential attendant, on the first appearance of the enemy, at the ex-
press

press orders of the Prince, her husband ; but so great had been their consternation, at the moment, that the unhappy parents had forgotten the sole pledge of their mutual affection, whose infantine years requiring a more constant attention than his mother could, consonant with her other duties, bestow upon him, had been committed to the care of a nurse, of whom the Princess entertained the highest opinion. Scarcely had the wretched mother entered the convent, than the recollection of the young Rodolphus burst upon her memory ; and although the streets were moistened with the blood which flowed from the wounds received by her brave, but unfortunate subjects, and the shouts of the conquerors sounded in her ears, she would have rushed forth in search of her beloved infant, had she not been restrained by force ; and it might perhaps be deemed fortunate for her that her reason became, for a length of time, so unsettled as to render her insensible of the occurrences that were passing.

The fury of the conqueror seemed unappeased by death itself, as no entreaties, even of his own officers, could persuade him, for several days, to grant the last solemn rites to the unfortunate Prince, on whose body the utmost indignities were practised, and whose bravery, in defence of the sole remaining possessions of his family, merited a better fate.

As soon as Albert had regained the apartment which the harsh croaking of the raven had impelled him to quit with so much haste, he commanded one of the attendants to seek out for the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, who, among all his officers, possessed his greatest esteem and confidence. On the arrival of his friend, Albert dismissed the vassals, who were in waiting. A heavy gloom overshadowed his countenance, and the mind of the haughty conqueror appeared restless and uneasy. D'Armfeldt, who, having been brought up with Albert from his infancy, although the fortune of the latter had far outstripped his own less-
aspiring

aspiring genius in the pursuit of ambition, not only professed, but sincerely entertained the greatest friendship for him, was much concerned at those traits of melancholy which were so conspicuous in his behaviour.

“D’Armfeldt,” exclaimed Albert, as soon as he perceived his approach, “we must hasten our departure from hence.”

“My Lord !”

“Yes, my friend, fate drives me on, and I must obey.”

“Pardon me, my Lord,” rejoined D’Armfeldt, “if the friendship you have ever honoured me with, and which I have esteemed as the greatest blessing of my life, renders me so presumptuous as to inquire the reasons of so sudden and extraordinary a resolution ; has the principality of Clagenfurth no further charms for its conqueror than the conquest itself inspired ? Will Albert leave a court unseen, which as yet has only presented to his view the traces of slaughter and devastation, but which is

now preparing to receive its master with all the smiles of beauty? Perhaps too the lovely Adeline may——”

“ Hold, D’Armfeldt, nor drive me to distraction; her charms have precipitated my fate, and that conquest which I once looked forward to as the height of my ambition, and which I believed would have placed me on the pinnacle of happiness, is, through the perverseness of my fortune, the occasion of my disappointment. Cursed, fatal revenge! Was it not enough that my rival fell to rise no more, but, that possessed with a demoniacal fury, I should, by trampling on the rights of humanity, wantonly cast away the blessing I had so nearly obtained? I perceive your astonishment; these mysterious expressions may induce you to fancy that my senses are disordered: listen then with patience to what has hitherto been buried, even from the researches of friendship, within my own breast. But this eventful moment has recalled scenes to my agonized memory long—
since

since past and forgotten, and impells me to seek comfort and advice from the sincerity of a friend, if the wretched Albert possesses so great a treasure."

D'Armfeldt, who perceived how deeply his mind was hurt by the impression that was made upon it, took no notice of the last sentence, as he attributed it merely to the agony of the moment; and with all the persuasive powers he was master of, endeavoured to obtain his confidence, that he might be better enabled to counteract the effects of this unknown fatality; he succeeded.

"It is not unknown to you," said Albert, "that my father was remarkably fond of astrological observations; and indeed he had made so great a progress in the occult sciences, that at last he would never undertake any action without having recourse to these mysterious ordinances, in the hopes of discovering the certainty, or uncertainty, of success, in any undertaking he was about to commence; and as the sub-

sequent events more frequently happened to coincide with the intelligence he supposed that he had obtained by these means, than otherwise, every doubt of their efficacy, or the certainty of the predictions, was entirely removed from his mind. I was constantly in the habit of participating in these scenes, and in consequence naturally imbibed similar opinions. When I had arrived at the age of eighteen, my father, not chusing to trust to his own skill in divination, determined to consult an aged female, whose predictions the superstition of the country considered infallible, on my future prospects in life. Being myself convinced of her power, I the more readily acceded to the proposition; and trembling with an anxiety natural on so solemn an occasion, I arrived at her lonely habitation. It was situated in a rock, beneath whose arched brows appeared the entrance of a cavern, surrounded with the misletoe, the vervain, and various other shrubs and herbs appropriate to the myste-

rious rites performed in the interior. Those ceremonies, however, the eyes of her visitors were seldom permitted to behold ; but as my father, as I have before observed, was himself an adept, she was not so reserved before us as was her general custom, and indeed our rank was perhaps a further inducement for her to relax from the severity of her general usage. She received us with politeness ; but I must confess that a tremor which I could scarcely overcome, seized me on the first view of the hideous object which I beheld. Independent of a figure scarcely human, her habiliments were ornamented with the representation of such grotesque, yet dreadful objects, grouped together in such a manner as to render their appearance the most terrific. Around her apartment, which appeared to be excavated from the solid rock, were disposed various hieroglyphics, and other unknown and mysterious characters, while her sole companions seemed to be a cat, black as jet itself, and of a size superior to

any I had ever beheld : this animal occupied a vacant space on her right hand, while perched on the arm of the chair whereon she sat, was a raven, whose discordant notes, at my approach, added to that terror which had before so nearly overpowered my faculties. I shall not fatigue your patience with the description of the ceremonies she performed before she pronounced my future destiny ; the first part of which gave both my father and myself the greatest satisfaction, and she concluded in these memorable words :—‘ *But when Albert suffers his thirst of revenge to overcome his humanity, and wars with the dead, then shall this winged messenger of my power (pointing to the raven beside her,) remind him of the disgraceful act, and from that time his life will be attended with such difficulties and dangers, that even the high courage he possesses will scarcely be able to surmount, unless he flies the fatal spot, and restores a lost infant to the arms of his distracted mother, and a legal heir to the birthright he is entitled to.*’

“ Such,

“Such, D’Armfeldt, was the dreadful denunciation; my blood chilled at the idea, and my senses were for an instant so shocked, that it required a great exertion in my father to rouse me from the situation into which the prophetic speech of the hag had thrown me. His judicious observations, however, soon quieted my apprehensions, as he remarked, (and indeed his remarks appeared to me too just and conclusive to be contradicted,) that I might look forward to a life of constant happiness, as it was impossible that an heart in which the principles of honour and justice were so firmly rooted, as in mine, could ever incur the dangers denounced; my own pride assisted the delusion, and I continued in fancied security; but the mist is now dissolved, and the solemn messenger of fate has announced my future destiny.”

Albert paused.—“My Lord,” said D’Armfeldt, taking advantage of this cessation, “you surprise me; forgive my importunity, but deign to be more explicit.”

“Heard you not,” said Albert, “the
ominous

ominous sound that denounced my crime, my loss of honour?"

"Gracious powers," exclaimed D'Armfelt, "what can this mean? To what do you allude? Believe me, my Lord, no sound uncommon has reached my ears: loss of honour! it cannot be; who dares asperse——"

"Patience, my friend," replied the chief, "all will soon be unravelled. D'Armfeldt must well know that no man dares asperse the honour of Albert; but Albert himself is the accuser of Albert; conscience cries out, and will be heard. You know the savage fury with which some malignant fiend, jealous of my glory and happiness, inspired me, and induced me to spurn even the solicitations of my friends, who requested the solemn rites of the church for the body of the deceased Prince; call to your recollection the last words of the prophetic hag; an hour has scarce passed since the winged denunciator of her prediction, perching on the battlements of Clagenfurth, thrice
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by its portentous croak, reminded me of its errand, and having fulfilled the predestined commands of its mistress, directed its flight towards the mountains of Switzerland, in the sight of my assembled vassals. Is not this more than superstition? Can we see with our eyes, and hear with our ears, and not believe? D'Armfeldt, I confess it has unmanned me; but I trust that my agitation, which was extreme, was not particularly remarked by the troops who were assembled on the platform, and that the cause of it will remain undiscovered to all, except the bosom of friendship, to which I fly for consolation and advice."

To this solemn appeal D'Armfeldt was at a loss in what manner to reply; he perceived how deeply the seeds of superstition were engrafted on the mind of his friend, and he hesitated whether he should believe the tale he had heard as a reality, or consider it as the phantom of an heated imagination. He determined, however, on reflection, to pursue a middle course, and
without

without entering into an argument upon the truth or fallacy of the prediction, to stimulate the mind of his friend, and rouse it to exertion ; and the latter part of the prophecy itself would, he trusted, afford reasons sufficient for his purpose : assuming therefore a firm tone, he replied to the last observations of Albert—" My hesitation in answering those claims of friendship you appeal to, proceeds from the astonishment your unexpected disclosure has impressed upon my mind. That Albert, at the age of eighteen, should have permitted the gloom of superstition to have biassed his judgment, particularly when sanctioned by the example of a parent, is not a subject of wonder. The youthful mind will naturally receive and cherish those ideas which it is nurtured in, and experience only can convince it of the propriety of adhering to them. Buried in solitude, such ideas may become inherent in the constitution, and will never fail of being countenanced by the artful and designing. But can Albert,

bert, whose name stands conspicuous among the list of German heroes, can a conqueror, who has just obtained the summit of his wishes, by possessing himself of the dominions of his rival, and revenging the disgrace he had before suffered, by the extinction of his enemies, timidly desert, and fly from those blessings he has so hardly obtained, because—shame on the dastard thought!—a solitary bird perches on his battlements, and then flies in a particular direction. Where is that energy which, in despite of all opposition, broke through the iron ranks of the Turkish battalia? Would thousands of ravens, croaking with their hoarsest fury, have prevented Albert from performing the glorious action? Forgive me, my friend, for the boldness of my speech, but though the lancet may probe deep, I trust the cure will be more radical. But what does the prophecy, if such it is, require you to do? It says, ‘if you do not quit the spot, your future life shall be attended with dangers and difficulties.’

ties.' Is this denunciation sufficient to terrify the soul of a warrior? Are dangers and difficulties so terrific to his ear as to oblige him tamely to resign the glorious fruits of his past labours, and the hopes of possessing that happiness he has been so long in quest of, and which I doubt not a short period of time will firmly secure to him? Are the charms of Adeline——"

"Hold, D'Armfeldt, no more; there needs not that name to determine me; your reproaches, too justly merited, have long since pierced my heart, and I blush at the recollection of my weakness. Forgive me, my friend; from this instant Albert shall be himself again, and bravely meet those dangers denounced by my wayward fate; let this scene be for ever buried in oblivion!"

D'Armfeldt rejoiced at the resolution of Albert, and promised eternal secrecy. He however observed, that although he reprehended pusillanimity, he did not disapprove of caution, and suggested, that it might be prudent,

prudent, for various reasons, to gain the possession, if possible, of the legal heir to the principality of Clagenfurth.

“Has there been any intelligence received relative to the infant Rodolphus?” asked the Prince.

“None, my Lord,” replied D’Armfeldt, “although I have taken the utmost pains in the inquiry ; but so few are there remaining who withstood the assault, that it is difficult to discover any confidential servant ; it is certain, however, that he was in the Castle at the first onset, as he was seen in the arms of his nurse not an hour before ; but neither her nor the infant have been heard of since.”

“Offer the greatest rewards,” rejoined Albert, “for his discovery. It is a matter of the first importance to procure possession of his person ; as the power I at present possess, nay, the future happiness of my life, may depend on my success. You well know, D’Armfeldt, that it was not ambition, nor the desire of obtaining the principality

principality of Clagenfurth, that was the principal occasion of my taking up arms; a motive still more powerful urged me on, although disguised under imaginary injuries; that motive was love. Long before the Prince of Clagenfurth obtained the hand of the Princess Adeline, her charms had made an impression on my heart, which not time itself, neither her being possessed by a more fortunate rival, has been able to eradicate. In the bitterness of my disappointment, I imprecated the most dreadful vengeance on the destroyer of that happiness I had looked forward to, and which I had some reason to believe the lovely Adeline would not have refused accepting at my hands, had not the commands of an imperious parent forced her into the arms of another. The Prince was not ignorant of my pretensions to the favour of Adeline, notwithstanding which, he ungenerously took advantage of that authority an ambitious father had armed him with, and led his devoted victim to the altar. But he
has

has paid for his insulting superiority ; vengeance has been awake, and has asserted its noblest rights ; it now remains for us to reap the fruits of its effect ; but first let my orders respecting the infant Rodolphus be immediately obeyed."

D'Armfeldt instantly departed to execute his commission, although with a secret reluctance ; a new and indescribable sensation, for which he could not account, thrilled through his frame ; he knew the disposition of Albert ; a slave to his passions, no trivial impediments could deter him from the gratification of them, and he regarded the fair sex only as slaves to the conqueror. What therefore might be the fate of a lovely woman, exposed not only perhaps to the desires, but to the fury of the present disposer of her destiny, should she fall into his power ? It is true, he professed a regard for her ; but would the gentle Adeline receive the murderer of her husband as her lover, and would not a repulse stimulate the fiery passions which a
hope

hope of success only kept dormant? At present she was under the protection of religion; but would that be a sufficient bar to the impetuosity and rage of a disappointed lover? Her son too, the young Rodolphus, should Albert gain possession of his person, might not his innocent life be made the pledge of his mother's acquiescence to the wishes of her persecutor? D'Armfeldt shuddered at the reflection, yet nevertheless esteeming his duty to his chieftain far paramount to every other consideration, he resolved to obey the orders he had received, and trust to Providence for the event.

The carnage which had ensued on the sacking of the Castle, had been, as before observed, of so extensive a nature, that D'Armfeldt long sought in vain to find an inhabitant from whom he could procure the least information; every avenue, every secret vault and chamber were examined without effect; and he was on the point of returning to inform Albert of his want of
success,

success, when one of his emissaries brought an old man to him, whose infirmities forbidding him to assist in the protection of the Castle, he had sought to secure his own safety by taking shelter in the chapel in a cavity behind the altar.

To the various interrogatories of D'Armfeldt, the old domestic remained mute; neither entreaties nor threats were of any avail. Tired at length with his endeavours, although secretly rejoiced at his ill success, D'Armfeldt determined to take him into the presence of Albert, as he dared not form an excuse for dismissing him without a more minute examination. He therefore commanded his attendance to the apartment where he had left his chief.

D'Armfeldt found Albert pacing the room with hurried steps, and so absorbed was he in his reflections, that he perceived not his approach. The voice of his friend announcing the discovery of an old domestic belonging to the Castle, roused him from his reverie; he hastily advanced towards
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the old man, who, trembling with age, stood at the entrance of the apartment; and, in a voice well calculated to strike terror, and to enforce obedience, demanded of him if he knew what was become of the infant Rodolphus.

Sternheim, such was the name of this ancient domestic, now broke the silence he had so impenetrably observed to all the inquiries of D'Armfeldt; and in a tone more firm than the weakness of his frame apparently warranted, informed the haughty chief that he had been removed to a place of safety by the Chevalier Seckendorf, on the first notice of the approach of an hostile foe.

The eyes of Albert flashed with intolerable fury at this intelligence; and so distracted was he at the knowledge that the young Rodolphus had escaped his power, that, forgetting the fatal consequence he had already experienced of giving way to the sudden impulse of rage, he would, had it not been for the interference of D'Armfeldt,

feldt, have annihilated the trembling wretch who had inflicted such a torture on his heart.

D'Armfeldt beheld the sudden rage of Albert with astonishment, but his surprise was much more excited, when, in an instant, the mind of his friend appeared calm and unruffled, and he addressed the old man in a tone indicative of compassion rather than of resentment.

"How long is it," said Albert, "that you have been an inhabitant of this Castle?"

"I may say," replied Sternheim, "that I have lived here almost from my birth, as both my parents were retainers belonging the Princes of Clagenfurth, and I was, when of an age sufficient, appointed to attend the late Prince."

A flush, like the return of anger, now transiently glowed on the face of Albert, but he instantly dispelled it, observing that he supposed he had been in the particular confidence of his master.

Sternheim hesitated for an answer; a se-

cret impulse told him that these inquiries, proceeding from so inveterate an enemy, must conceal some purpose prejudicial to the safety or the interest of the Prince's surviving family; he therefore replied, that the station he held was too inferior to admit of such an honour.

Albert had remarked the hesitation of Sternheim, and was convinced of the duplicity of his answer, but having determined in his own mind the conduct he would pursue, it passed unnoticed by him; and under the plea of compassion for his infirmities, he forbore asking him any more questions, giving orders to D'Armfeldt, who had remained, in silent wonder and anxiety for the termination of a scene so uncommon, to see that Sternheim had proper care taken of him, as it was his intention to provide for his future wants, and make up for the loss of his late master.

The commands of Albert were no sooner obeyed, and he was left to himself, than he digested a plan for the discovery of the fugitives,

gitives, without having recourse to harsh and violent measures, which, if met with fortitude, as he had reason, from the calm intrepidity of Sternheim, to suppose they would be, might tend to render his designs futile, rather than hasten them to perfection. The name of Seckendorf suggested the sudden idea; he was well acquainted with the herosim of his character, and of the great respect he was held in, not only in the city of Clagenfurth, but also in the whole neighbourhood. He knew likewise that he possessed a strength of mind superior to most men; a mind formed not to be shaken by trivial events, or to bend beneath the frowns of fortune. To intimidate a person of this description, he was convinced was beyond the utmost stretch of his power. Albert therefore hesitated not to call in to his assistance the engines of art and duplicity; he was well aware that the affection of Seckendorf for the late Prince of Clagenfurth was almost paternal; on that affection he built his hopes of success.

It was natural to suppose that Seckendorf would be anxious to know the events which had taken place subsequent to his leaving the Castle with his young protegee; for although common report might have conveyed a summary account, yet there were many minutiae, which would, doubtless, be interesting to him, could he attain the information of them. The discovery of Sternheim, and his knowledge that by the means of Seckendorf, Rodolphus had been conveyed to a place of safety, suggested to Albert the scheme of inveigling the old man, under the pretence of regard for the late Prince, to give intelligence to him in what state affairs were; for he doubted not but that he well knew the place of his retreat, which, if he could once discover, he flattered himself that it would be an easy matter, by surrounding him with spies, to find out where his infant charge was secured. To effect this scheme, he resolved to treat Sternheim with apparent kindness, leaving him quite free as to his actions,

actions, but still keeping a wary eye over him ; by adhering to this mode, he thought himself certain of throwing him off his guard, and that the accomplishment of his wishes would be finally fulfilled.

Sternheim had long made mankind his study ; his mind, although not cultivated by education, was of a superior cast ; and the late Prince, who was not only an admirer, but a protector of merit, found his abilities so transcendant over the generality of his other retainers, that he entrusted him with commissions of peculiar delicacy, which he constantly executed so much to his satisfaction, that although pride, or some other unknown motive, restrained the Prince from admitting him to any other situation in his household than a mere menial, yet, when alone, he would frequently treat him more like a friend than a servant. Nor did his discernment fail him in this instance ; the high confidence placed in Sternheim was repaid by the most scrupulous fidelity ; nor could even the malicious breath of

slander tax him with having betrayed a secret entrusted to him.

By a man endowed with these qualities, the superficial friendship of Albert was easily penetrated ; but still, it became a matter of the greatest consideration and importance, how to conduct himself so as he might appear to enter into the views of the conqueror, without betraying the interests of the late Prince's family.

Among other secrets of consequence committed to him, was one which he was bound by the most solemn oaths never to discover during the lifetime of his master, as it involved consequences which might effectuate his ruin, by drawing upon him the vengeance of some of the most powerful nobility in the German empire. This important secret was a marriage entered into by the deceased Prince many years prior to his connexion with Adeline ; but the object of his affection being supposed to be of a rank which the established etiquette of the empire esteemed a degradation,

tion, for a person of noble birth to enter into a matrimonial engagement with, he had enjoyed his happiness in secret, and no person but Sternheim, his faithful domestic, was ever acquainted with the circumstance that the solemn rites of the church had legally cemented the union.

Many years passed in mutual felicity, until death deprived the Prince of the affection of a lovely woman, whose sole wish had always been the happiness of her adored husband ; nor, conscious that she possessed his love and undivided affection, did a sigh ever escape her for the loss of those outward marks of respect, which an acknowledged wife would have been entitled to. One lovely girl had, if possible, more firmly cemented their mutual affection, who, soon after the loss of her mother, was placed in a respectable convent at some distance from the Prince's dominions, as the orphan daughter of a friend whom the Prince respected.

This deception was easily arranged, and

as readily believed, Sternheim alone, as he believed, being acquainted with the real truth. Some time after this event had taken place, the Prince of Clagenfurth, in order to overcome the grief which the loss of so amiable a companion occasioned him, determined to travel; after leaving his dominions under proper care, he visited the different courts of the empire in a private character, attended solely by the faithful Sternheim. At one of these he met with Adeline de Mountfort; her charms, and a certain resemblance, which he fancied that he beheld in her features, to those which he had so long been accustomed to behold with the sincerest regard, attracted his attention; and finding, on a more intimate acquaintance, her intellectual charms equal, if not superior to her superficial ones, he became sincerely attached to her. The regard soon became mutual, and an acknowledgment of the Prince's rank obviated every objection that might otherwise have been made by a family, in whose estimation,

tion, high birth, and an unstained nobility, was a passport sufficient to ensure a ready compliance with a request of becoming a member of it. The Prince was well aware of this foible, that was so firmly engrafted in the minds of the family he was about to implant into his own, and judged that a knowledge of his prior marriage would prove an insuperable bar to the attainment of his present wishes, more particularly if it was known that he had issue by it; he therefore hastily determined to keep them in ignorance of such an event having ever taken place, and mentally resolved never to acknowledge his innocent daughter as his own. The secret had been faithfully kept, neither was Adeline acquainted that such a being existed.

Sternheim, as soon as he perceived that it was the intention of Albert to discover if possible the infant Rodolphus, determined, in order to distract his attention, and by that means multiply the difficulties of discovery, to throw out hints respecting a for-

mer marriage, and that there still remained issue from it, leaving it doubtful whether that issue was male or female. He had been informed by D'Armfeldt of the reasons why Albert was so desirous of gaining information respecting the young Rodolphus ; still he suspected his real intentions, and he judged, that as by these hints, it might become doubtful whether Rodolphus was the legal heir or not, Albert might relax in his researches after him. But in order to carry on the deception more completely, it was necessary to develop the long-concealed mystery to the Princess Adeline ; as otherwise her maternal feelings would naturally be alarmed, and in order to protect the rights of her own son, she might possibly be induced, by the artful management and specious promises of Albert, to deliver him up to his care, as a sure protection against this sudden and hitherto unknown pretender. The discovery was certainly a matter of great delicacy, but Sternheim trusted to the

the

the knowledge of the Princess's character for the reception it would meet with. He had always experienced the friendship of the Princess, and indeed had been so great a favourite as constantly to have been entrusted with the distribution of those acts of charity she was accustomed to bestow on such who laboured under the scourge of misfortune, and whose characters would bear the necessary scrutiny. To the failings of her own sex she was peculiarly liberal; and if any act of beneficence gave her more satisfaction than another, it was when she had it in her power to rescue an unfortunate female from the gulph of misery and destruction. To such a disposition the tale of the deserted orphan could not prove otherwise than interesting, and Sternheim made no doubt but that, if necessary, as far as prudence would admit, Adeline would become a mother to her.

In consequence of the plan adopted by Albert, Sternheim was left the uncontrouled master of his actions. But his penetration

and knowledge of the human heart, convinced him that this apparent confidence was entirely artificial, and that every step he took, or sentence he uttered, was, by the emissaries employed for the special purpose, made known to their master. This circumstance, far from giving him any concern, or deterring him from pursuing the plan he had chalked out, rather encouraged him, as the tale which he intended to propagate respecting the unknown progeny of the deceased Prince, being conveyed to the ears of Albert by his own creatures, would obtain a more ready belief, and consequently operate with greater force on his mind than if related by accident.

The convent in which the Princess Adeline had taken refuge was but a short distance from Clagenfurth ; Sternheim therefore took an early opportunity of presenting himself at the gate, under the pretence of inquiring after her health. During his walk thither, he had anticipated the pleasure and satisfaction his beloved mistress would

would experience at beholding a person whom she had always treated with a kindness far superior to the rest of the domestics, and whom she might naturally have supposed had shared the melancholy fate of the other inhabitants at the Castle, more especially as some time had passed, notwithstanding her most diligent inquiries, since she had received the least intelligence respecting the occurrences which had happened subsequent to the fatal moment, when the death of her beloved husband, and the destructive massacre that ensued, made her an unprotected widow, and her infant a fugitive orphan.

With a hand, trembling much more from agitation at the idea of the approaching interview than from age, Sternheim seized the ponderous knocker, the sound of which reverberating through the spacious dome, announced the arrival of a stranger. A few minutes only elapsed before the portress cautiously opening the wicket of the larger gate, inquired the name and business of
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of the stranger. The first question was readily answered, but the latter Sternheim replied could only be communicated to the Princess of Clagenfurth in person.

“ You have had your walk then, I believe, to little purpose,” rejoined the portress, “ as the Princess has given express orders that no one should be admitted to her presence on any pretence whatsoever, except she is previously satisfied that their intentions are not inimical to her.”

“ Well, well,” cried Sternheim, “ tell her my name, and the Princess, I will engage, will be perfectly convinced of my good wishes to her.”

“ Your name, indeed !” replied the portress ; “ what, is there magic in it ? How is the Princess to know whether it is your name or not ? To be sure, you do not look like an impostor ; those grey hairs ought not to cover the brains of iniquity ; neither should that furrowed countenance wear the mask of hypocrisy : but surrounded as the Princess is, with dangers of
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no common import, and exposed to the various schemes which artifice and power conjoined are daily putting in practice to obtain possession of her person, or force her to quit an asylum, which, at present, is her sole protection, you must be sensible that a denial to your request is not the result of wanton petulance or arrogant superiority, but of a just and necessary caution."

"Your observations are correct," said Sternheim; "and I feel most happy in having experienced a proof of the regard in which the Princess Adeline is held by the sisterhood of these sacred walls."

"We should be guilty of the most heinous of sins, ingratitude," rejoined the portress, "were we to neglect the smallest precaution to ensure her safety, or omit any endeavour to render her residence here as agreeable as possible to her: independent of the high confidence placed in us, her general affability and kindness to all ranks, has so firmly rooted her in the
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affections of the abbess and the whole sisterhood, that even Envy itself dares not breathe her poisonous venom, but shrinks appalled before the excellence it is forced to admire."

"Why you are quite enthusiastic," rejoined Sternheim with a smile, "in the praises of the Princess; and really if I had not before been well acquainted with her, your description would have induced me to have attempted an introduction by some means or other: but come," continued Sternheim, who perceived the portress looked grave, and was apparently so alarmed at his last observation as almost to close the wicket against him, "I have just recollected a token by which the Princess will readily recognize me to be the identical person I assert myself, and no impostor. Take this ring; tell her it was her gift to her faithful domestic Sternheim, on the morning of that day when Rodolphus, falling into the moat that surrounds the Castle, was saved from premature destruction."

"Rodolphus!"

“Rodolphus!” exclaimed the portress, “do you know any thing of him? What is become of him? Oh! if you bring tidings of Rodolphus, you will indeed cause the mourner to rejoice, and restore a gleam of happiness to that heart in which sorrow and grief alone has, for some time past, taken up its habitation.”

“A truce with questions and observations,” cried Sternheim, with some impetuosity, “and hasten to deliver the ring; the spies of Albert are every where, and delay may be dangerous.”

This observation quickened the steps of the cautious portress, who soon executed her commission; and Sternheim, the faithful Sternheim, was ordered by the Princess to be admitted. In the short interval previous to his arrival at her apartment, the mind of Adeline had undergone that variety of changes which the uncertainty of the intelligence so unexpected an interview might disclose, naturally produced. But hopes and fears respecting the fate of
her

her beloved infant, were the chief, nay, almost the sole passions that occupied her mind; all minor misfortunes were buried in the magnitude of the anguish occasioned by the vague reports in circulation respecting him, some of which, and these not the most favourable, had penetrated into the interior of her solitary seclusion; and the doubt that existed of their truth occasioned little less anguish than the most fatal reality would have implanted.

Sternheim had no sooner entered the apartment where the Princess was prepared to receive him, than bending his aged knee to the earth, he offered up his most grateful thanks to Providence, that he had once more been permitted to approach his respected mistress.

The Princess, although extremely agitated, soon regained a considerable degree of composure, and ordered him not only to rise, but to seat himself, an honour he would have declined, had not the command been repeated in a manner that convinced him

him a ready compliance would be satisfactory to the Princess. A few moments of anxious silence ensued, which was at last broken by the tremulous voice of Adeline, who, fixing her eyes on Sterheim, with a look sufficiently expressive of her feelings, faltered out, "Is Rodolphus——"

The sentence remained unfinished; but her maternal anguish was quickly dissipated by the immediate reply of Sternheim—"Madam, Rodolphus is safe." Yet scarce had these important words escaped his lips than Nature, unable to bear the sudden tide of joy, became imbecile, and Adeline sunk into a temporary inanition. Sternheim was alarmed, and hastily calling for assistance, the abbess herself approached, attended by some others of the sisterhood; the scene they beheld surprised them, and suspicions, very unfavourable to the faithful domestic, were beginning to arise in their minds, when the remedies which had been applied to the Princess produced
their

their effect. She immediately perceived the astonishment depicted in the countenances of the abbess and her attendants, and also the impression that the presence of Sternheim had made on them. A flood of tears however having considerably relieved her heart, oppressed with an overflow of joy, at the happy discovery of the safety of her darling infant, she hastened to explain the cause of the late alarm, and gracefully thanking the abbess for her solicitude concerning her, requested to be left alone with Sternheim, as, satisfied of one fact, she found her spirits fully equal to encounter any other intelligence, of whatever nature it might prove. The information respecting the welfare of the young Rodolphus gave scarcely less satisfaction to the benevolent abbess and the rest of the society, than it had to the Princess herself, and they all united in the wish that Providence would not desert the fatherless and the widow, but would in due time put an
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end to their sufferings, and restore them to those rights of which a tyrannic conqueror had deprived them.

No sooner were the inhabitants of the convent withdrawn, than the Princess summoning up all her resolution, requested Sternheim to acquaint her with the transactions that had taken place subsequent to her removal from the Castle ; and more particularly by what means the young Rodolphus had been preserved from falling into the hands of the conqueror. Although this was a task that would recall scenes calculated to awaken the most acute feelings, yet, being well acquainted with the natural strength of Adeline's mind, and judging that the relation would ultimately tend to alleviate rather than add to her distress, Sternheim complied with the request.

“ It is needless for me,” said he, “ to describe the terror that pervaded the greatest part of the Castle on the approach of Albert ; the threats he made use of almost
paralyzed

paralyzed the feelings of many ; yet, even amidst this general alarm, the safety of their respected Princess became the principal object of concern, not only to the domestics, but to the Prince. Scarcely had those who were commanded by him to convey you to this convent departed, than the enemy appeared at the gates. At that instant, Madame Seckendorf, to whose care Rodolphus had been entrusted, ignorant of your departure, approached in the utmost terror the apartment where the Prince was issuing his final orders to the different officers and his principal domestics. At the sight of the infant he started, and hastily summoning the Chevalier, her husband, requested him, by the hopes he entertained of an eternity hereafter, to save his child, the sole remaining heir of his family, from the grasp of his persecutor.

“ It was with the greatest difficulty that the Chevalier was persuaded to leave a master in whose cause he had so frequently
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and successfully combated, and who, he was well assured, would want all the assistance that courage and resolution could give; neither was it, until the Prince almost with tears implored, not commanded him, to be the protector of his child, that he consented. No time was to be lost; taking therefore a last farewell of his beloved sovereign, he immediately escaped from the city by a private gate, accompanied by his wife, and her infant charge. The scene was awful and solemn; but although the pearly drop trickled unperceived adown the furrowed cheeks of the hardiest veteran, yet the feelings excited by it served as an additional stimulus to their ardour. The final catastrophe is too well known to need a repetition; let us then draw a veil over the past, and consider only the most effective means to ensure the safety both of yourself and the young Rodolphus."

Sternheim paused, in order to reflect on the best method of introducing the subject

ject he wished to mention. The Princess, however, taking advantage of this cessation, inquired if he was acquainted with the retreat chosen for Rodolphus, and how he himself had been so fortunate as to escape the indiscriminate massacre which was reported to have taken place ?

“ A most sacred oath,” replied Sternheim, “ forbids me to disclose, even to his mother, the intended residence of Rodolphus, without the permission of the Chevalier. This was exacted of me by the latter, who, thinking that I might hereafter be of service, and satisfied, that not all the tortures the tyrant could invent would force the secret from me, intrusted me with the knowledge, as he hastily passed by my apartment ; and I trust my Princess will not think me wanting in my duty or respect, for declining to give the answer she might wish.”

“ Certainly not,” replied Adeline ; “ yet it is hard—but no matter, all may be for the best ; perhaps the conqueror might
take

take advantage of some weak moment, and one incautious word might render me completely wretched. Thank Heaven that such faithful friends are yet spared to me, under whose fostering care my Rodolphus may inherit the virtues of his father, and revenge the wrongs inflicted by malicious hatred. But say, how came you to escape? Had the cruel Albert a respect for those grey hairs, or did fortune favour you?"

"Alas, Madame! had the latter deserted me, the former would have availed me but little. As soon as I perceived that no hopes remained, and trusting that I might at some future time be of service to the relics of my dear master, under whose protection I was born and bred, I contrived, during the height of the massacre, to conceal myself in a cavity behind the altar, intending to have joined the Chevalier Seckendorf the earliest opportunity; but the emissaries of Albert discovered me, and I was taken before the conqueror. Death and destruction at first blazed with fury in his eyes, until of a sud-

den his countenance assumed a serenity that a moment's reflection convinced me was the mask of hypocrisy, and the prelude to some concealed design. I was not long kept in ignorance of his plan, as he inquired of me most particularly respecting the infant Rodolphus. As it was generally known that he had been conveyed away by the Chevalier Seckendorf, I made no secret of the fact, and that he had accompanied him in his flight. The chief perceiving that he could not gain any particular intelligence from me at that time, dismissed me with many friendly assurances of his future protection, and commanded his principal officer to take charge of me, giving me at the same time full liberty to dispose of myself as I thought proper. By this apparent lenity, he flattered himself that he should throw me off my guard, and make me subservient to his purpose, respecting the discovery of the infant Rodolphus, as he made no doubt but that I should eagerly avail myself of my fancied liberty, and hasten to
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join the fugitives. But I am too well acquainted with the insidiousness of his views, to fall into the snare that was so artfully laid for me, as I well know that I am surrounded by his spies, who have orders to watch every motion, more particularly should I attempt to leave the territories of Clagenfurth."

"Alas!" exclaimed the Princess, "your observations have destroyed the flattering hope that was rising in my bosom, of receiving some intelligence concerning Rodolphus through your means; but no, that must not be wished; and sooner would I deprive myself for ever of his sight, than by a weak and culpable fondness betray him into the hands of his persecutor. But why is Albert so anxious to get him into his power? Is his mind so soon pregnant with fears for the future, that he dreads an avenger of his father's wrongs in an infant, who as yet can scarce pronounce his name? If such are his alarms, I envy him not the power he has acquired."

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"Madame,"

“Madame,” replied Sternheim, “the views of Albert are buried in uncertainty, and although brave, he is a slave to superstition. Accident has made me acquainted with a circumstance, on which he believes, or affects to believe, that his future prospects in life depend; and indeed, to acquaint you with this, and another most material occurrence, was my chief view in presuming to solicit an audience.”—Sternheim here related to the Princess the prophecy, also the subsequent events arising from it, to which she appeared to pay more than usual attention.—“This,” proceeded he, “leaves it in doubt whether his intentions are friendly towards Rodolphus or otherwise; certain am I that he will make it a pretence for wishing to discover his retreat. But can we suppose a resentment so determinate, so inveterate as that which recently actuated the breast of Albert, and caused him to forget even the common duties of humanity, is so easily subdued, as in an instant to assume the resemblance of regard? Can

Can he imagine that the friends of the Princess of Clagenfurth are so blind, or so forgetful of her injuries, as to be lulled into so preposterous a security? If such are his ideas, I trust that he will find them exist only in his own breast, and that those who wish well to the injured orphan will spurn at the conciliating overture with the contempt it deserves. But a greater caution than ever is necessary, as it is much more difficult to counteract insidious artifice than open and avowed force. The emissaries whom Albert employs are numerous, and although I am firmly persuaded that all their endeavours at discovery will be fruitless, yet I have too often known the dangers attendant on what has been deemed perfect security, to relax in the smallest degree from the means offered of counter-acting their designs."

"I thank you most sincerely for the caution you have given me," replied Adeline, "as it is possible that in an unguarded moment, deceived by the plausibility of

the well-told tale, and anxious to press a beloved infant to my widowed heart, I might voluntarily have joined with the specious deceiver, and instead of endeavouring to secrete the precious charge, have rashly deemed those friends rebels to their duty, who were performing it in the most essential manner. But you mentioned another occurrence that you had to acquaint me with; does it relate at all to our present subject?"

"It does, Madame, and that most materially, as it will tend not only to distract the attention of Albert, but, as it is in our power to manage it, perhaps to draw it off entirely from Rodolphus. The tale will doubtless surprise you, but I must request your patience until the conclusion, when I trust the existing circumstances will be considered as an ample apology for the concealment so long observed."

"You interest me extremely," said Adeline; "pray proceed."

"You are, Madame, too well acquainted with
with

with the prejudices entertained by the German nobility respecting intermarriages with families of inferior rank to themselves, however desirable the connexion may be in other respects, or however amiable the object, for me unnecessarily to dwell upon the subject. Neither, notwithstanding the inducement, should I have the courage to proceed with this specimen of private history, was I not sensible that the Princess of Clagenfurth entertained notions far more liberal than the generality of her rank, and that in her estimation the truly virtuous are the truly noble. It was, perhaps, this kindred sentiment that first attracted the notice of the late Prince, and which convinced him of the value of that heart, which even amidst scenes where the estimation of rank was considered of the highest importance, could preserve the purity of its sentiments so uncontaminated by example. Many years before my beloved master had seen you, or indeed had any knowledge of your existence, his heart had submitted to the charms of a lovely

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woman,

woman, who was possessed of every attribute to constitute the happiness of man, except that one deemed the most essential, a long train of illustrious ancestors. Amelia Wildenhaim was the orphan daughter of an officer, whose sole property was his sword, and who had perished bravely fighting in the cause of his country before the walls of Vienna, leaving his child, then about fifteen, to the care of a distant relation, who, from his situation in life, being the curè of a small village, was ill calculated for taking the charge of so precious a trust. Fortune however was favourable to the interesting orphan, and raised her up a friend in the mother of the late Prince. The improvements she made in every science, rendered her one of the most accomplished of her sex; but these superficial ornaments lost their lustre when compared with the more solid virtues of her mind. The loss of his mother (for the old Prince had been dead some time before) removed the sole obstacle to his intentions: he soon found that

that he was not indifferent to the lovely Amelia, and honour forbidding him to take an improper advantage of her regard, he secretly became her husband. One lovely child, whom he called Matilda, is the consequence of this union."

"Is she living?" eagerly exclaimed Adeline.

"She is," replied Sternheim, "and has just attained her sixteenth year; hitherto she has been educated as the child of an intimate friend, who confided her to the care of the Prince, nor is her real rank known to herself, or indeed to any one but myself and the abbess of the convent in which she is placed for her education."

"Ah, Sternheim," exclaimed the Princess, "of what real satisfaction has a false mistaken pride deprived me!"

"It was not, Madame, a doubt of your affection for her that induced the Prince to conceal the circumstance from your knowledge, but pardon me if I add, it was a dread lest the high rank of your relatives

should be esteemed injured and sullied by the acknowledgment of such a connexion ; often have I wished to reveal it, but a most solemn oath, never to drop the smallest hint of it, during the lifetime of the Prince, obliged me to be silent. An opportunity however has now offered, which I could not resist, as I flattered myself that I should not only promote the interests of the long-neglected orphan, but at the same time render the discovery of her existence serviceable in the present situation of affairs to the Princess of Clagenfurth."

" Sternheim," replied the Princess, " be more explicit ; I do not clearly understand you."

" My design, Madame, is this—to spread abroad the report that there is a child in existence by a prior marriage ; this will at least serve to encrease the difficulties of Albert, in respect to the succession of the principality, if not render them impossible to be overcome. I make not the least doubt but that as soon as it reaches the ears
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of the chief, I shall be strictly questioned. Fortunately I can confirm the marriage beyond the possibility of a cavil, and it will be no difficult matter for me to pretend ignorance of the consequences which resulted from it."

"I now perceive your drift," replied the Princess; "but although I am not so sanguine in my expectations as to the result as you appear to be, yet I will not disappoint your zeal to serve me, by cautious, and perhaps frivolous objections, being convinced that whether the scheme answers the end purposed or not, you are guided solely by affection and gratitude in the recommendation of it. But may I not be intrusted with the present residence of this newly-discovered relation?"

"Most undoubtedly, Madame," rejoined Sternheim; "she is placed under the care of the Abbess of St. Pierre, a convent situated in a most romantic and beautiful part of Switzerland."

At this instant their conversation was

interrupted by the abbess, who, apologizing for her intrusion, mentioned that she thought it necessary to inform them that several people had been observed walking round the environs of the convent ; and as it was an unusual circumstance, she judged that it might have some reference to the present interview. The suggestion of the abbess appeared very probable, and as the Princess was now sufficiently on her guard against the artifices of Albert, it was thought most prudent to break up the conference, neither, unless on any particular emergency, was it to be renewed.

No sooner was Sternheim departed than the Princess retired to her private apartment, in order to ruminate on the extraordinary occurrences of the day. That faithful domestic had truly appreciated the feelings of her mind at the knowledge of an event so totally unexpected, as a prior marriage entered into by the Prince, and that issue existed from the connexion. No envious thought obtruded itself on her imagination,

gination, which was employed solely on revolving plans for her future proceedings. One determination, however, she had mentally made, almost instantaneously, that if a reverse of fortune should ever restore her to that rank and power she was entitled to, the unacknowledged orphan should share her prosperity, and be placed in that sphere of life, from which a mistaken pride had cruelly secluded her. The information which she had received respecting Rodolphus, had entirely tranquillized her mind concerning him ; the fidelity of those who had taken him under their protection was too firm to be overcome, either by artifice or force ; while, at the same time, their various qualifications rendered them eminently capable of conducting the education of a young Prince, and of implanting into his mind those virtues which are not only the chief ornaments, but the most essential supporters of sovereign power, moderation, and justice. In Seckendorf the
dignity

dignity of the hero was so artfully blended with the humility of the man, that he imperceptibly led his followers willing captives to his opinions; nor did those in the highest or the lowest situations in life, ever leave him without being deeply impressed with the excellence of that character, whose principal, indeed sole employment, was, as far as human nature is capable of, the fulfilling his duty towards God and man. While therefore the young Rodolphus would be receiving the necessary instructions of virtue from one who might with justice be deemed its fountain head, he, at the same time, would gain experience, and the knowledge of other duties so essential to the fame and welfare of a Prince; as his reputation, both as a statesman and a warrior, rivalled the greatest luminaries of the age. Blessed with the acquisition of such a preceptor for the infant Rodolphus, the Princess reconciled herself to his absence, and even thought, perhaps with justice, that

that the school of adversity was more likely to form a good sovereign than that of flattery and prosperity.

As the abbess within whose convent she had taken refuge had given the most unequivocal testimonies of her attachment to her, and of a sincere regard for her future welfare, the Princess had long ceased to have any reserve with her; she accordingly repeated to her the intelligence she had received from Sternheim, and also the plan they proposed pursuing on the occasion. She observed, however, that no symptom of surprise was exhibited by the abbess on the occasion, and could not help making a remark of it to her. "The wonder of your Highness will cease," replied the abbess with a smile, "when I inform you, that notwithstanding the assertion of Sternheim that he was the sole partaker of the secret, I was myself acquainted with the fact; although I must so far justify him as to observe, that he could not possibly suspect my knowledge of it. The truth is, that at
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the time you, Madame, was sent here for protection, the Prince wrote to me his confession of the whole transaction, requesting me, that should he unfortunately fall in the defence of his life, or what was far more dear, his honour, that I would, at a proper time, acquaint you with it, and solicit your protection for the innocent orphan. This duty I should have discharged before, had I not considered that the uncertainty you laboured under respecting the fate of Rodolphus, left little or no room for the reception of new claims upon your compassion. That obstacle is, thank Heaven, removed, and I most sincerely congratulate you on the fortunate event. The letter of the Prince is of material consequence, as it places the fact asserted beyond the possibility of a doubt, and gives you, in conjunction with myself, full power to act as our judgments may direct, and circumstances permit. In respect to the plan proposed by Sternheim, although I have doubts of its answering any material purpose, yet I
should

should advise the experiment, as it will always be in our power to clear up any apparent mystery ; and it may be productive of some advantage, should Albert experience any reverse of fortune, whose mind would then be harrassed by the fears that the misfortunes predicted in his juvenile days were ready to burst in vengeance over his head ; for although he may discard those terrors for the moment, while engaged in active pursuits, yet a mind early habituated to superstitious notions, can never entirely eradicate them ; and it is not impossible but that, in order to avoid the threatened danger, he may make a virtue of necessity, and resign the rights he has usurped to the legal owner. But this we must leave to fate, and at present be guided by circumstances. It had been my original intention, after having disclosed to you the birth of the young Princess, to have removed her to this convent ; but such a plan would now not only be imprudent, but attended with extreme hazard ; as should

Albert,

Albert, whose emissaries are every where on the alert, gain intelligence of her intended arrival, he might seize her person, and detain her as an hostage for any further sacrifice he might deem necessary to require."

"Can the person under whose protection she is now placed be depended upon?" inquired the Princess.

"I believe she may," replied the abbess, "as by direction of the Prince, she is not to deliver her up to any one before she attains the age of twenty, except the person who demands her produces a particular token, the counterpart of which was left with her. This was sent to me with the letter; but as you will be a better judge how to act when you have seen it, permit me to send both that and the token to your apartment." The abbess now left the Princess; but a few minutes only had elapsed before one of the sisters brought the letter, together with the token. The well-known writing of the Prince affected Adeline extremely;

tremely ; and it was some time before she could bring her feelings to a state sufficiently calm to inspect the interesting contents, rendered doubly so by the recollection of the time when they were written.

“ MADAME,

“ It is at the instant when the horrors of war threaten destruction to these hitherto peaceable battlements, that the Prince of Clagenfurth feels himself impelled, by a duty too long delayed, through motives which his own heart revolted against, but which a dread of the sarcasms of the world induced him to cherish, to make a confidant of the Abbess of St. Veil; and disclose to her a circumstance of the utmost importance, and which has hitherto been solely confided to the breast of my faithful attendant, Sternheim. The well-known generosity of your sentiments are a sufficient security to me, that however culpable you may esteem the concealment,

you

you will lose sight of the act itself, and by extending your protection to the object of it, prevent her suffering any ill effects from the adoption of a measure so inconsiderate. To you I shall commit the task of disclosing the secret to the Princess Adeline, should it be my fate to fall a victim in the defence of my faithful subjects. I well know her heart, and am sensible that the sole resentment she will feel against me will be for having deprived her of executing a duty, which, to a mind moulded as my Adeline's is, would have been attended with the most exquisite delight: but time presses, and I must be brief.

“A marriage contracted many years ago, has left me the father of one child, whom I have named Matilda. To describe the charms that captivated me would be a task of difficulty; suffice it to say, that it was a strong resemblance between the Princess Adeline and my lost Amelia, both in mind and person, that led me a second time to the altar, a second time to experience

ence the utmost happiness that wedded love can bestow. One drawback alone accompanied my former felicity, but this was a trivial care, when contrasted with the years of solid enjoyment we both experienced, and which was dissolved only by death; need I add, it was that deficiency in the nobility of my Amelia's birth, to which the pride of the German princes too often sacrifice every other consideration. Indeed, so impressed was the mind of Amelia that the knowledge of my connexion with her might hereafter prove a serious injury to me, and be of little service to her child, especially as it was a female, that it was principally to her earnest entreaties on her deathbed, that I consented to conceal her rank, and educate her as the orphan daughter of a friend. For this purpose, as soon as the awful event of Amelia's decease had taken place, I conveyed her, then quite an infant, by the sole assistance of Sternheim, to the convent of St. Pierre, in Switzerland, leaving particular directions respecting her
future

future destiny, and also a token, of which I reserved a counterpart, which, on being delivered to the abbess, would prove the right of the bearer to take the charge of the young orphan.

“ This counterpart you will receive with this letter. I am sensible that it is needless for me to urge your attention towards the Princess Adeline ; your own friendship for that amiable woman is a sufficient security for your care.—Hark ! the trumpet announces the approach of the enemy ; I have no more time to spare ; Adeline must this instant away, or every avenue of escape will be secured. Farewell ; if Sternheim survives, from him you may learn the particulars. Once more farewell ; I go to conquer, or to die.

“ RODOLPHUS, PRINCE OF CLAGENFURTH.

“ *To the Abbess of St. Veil.*”

The feelings of Adeline, during the perusal of this letter, were excited to the highest

highest degree ; it gave her, however, great satisfaction to find that the secreting the rank and birth of the young orphan did not originate in any false pride, the growth of the Prince's own ideas, but from a source which added lustre to his character, namely, a sincere and affectionate regard for the last request of a beloved wife, who had so generously sacrificed the feelings of a mother to the prejudices of the world, and to her anxiety for the future happiness of a husband, whose attention had been, during their connexion, solely devoted to her. This very circumstance endeared her newly-discovered relative more than ever to the Princess; and many were the hours that were spent in consultation between her and the abbess, in forming plans for her removal, so as she might be more immediately under their own care and protection ; but all were rejected as dangerous : still, although nothing could be decided upon, the employment gave a diversity to the thoughts of the Princess, who no longer experienced

experienced that agonizing sameness of reflection, which being drawn into one focus, and consequently acting with greater force upon the nervous system, had already begun to undermine her health, and depress her spirits. The good sense of Adeline was not long in perceiving the beneficial effects that proceeded from this mental exertion, and confident, that in her future journey through the stages of life, she should have occasion for more than common firmness and resolution, she prepared to encounter the difficulties that she might meet with, by habituating herself to a conduct she had so early found a strong opposer, if not a conqueror of ennui.

At a small distance from the gates of Clagenfurth, Sternheim, was met on his return from the convent by the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, who readily entered into an easy and familiar conversation with him, and as if by mutual consent, the late occurrences became the principal topics of their discourse. The Chevalier lamented with
apparent

apparent warmth the indignity that the remains of the late Prince had received from the fury of Albert, a fury, he observed, which had left such pangs of remorse in the bosom of the chief, that not even the consolations of friendship could at times alleviate. Perceiving, however, that Sternheim listened to his discourse with a respectful silence, without presuming to make any comments, he artfully changed his mode of attack, by expressing his surprise that the Princess Adeline had not made any inquiries respecting the transactions which had taken place in the Castle subsequent to her removal from it; adding, that he was well satisfied that Albert entertained so high a respect for the Princess, that not even the sacred walls of St. Veil could prove a more secure retreat for her than the Castle of Clagenfurth.

“ Perhaps not,” replied Sternheim, who was willing to discover the drift of D’Armfeldt’s discourse; “ but you must allow for the terrors of a woman, unaccus-
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tomed to scenes of slaughter, or rather for the fears of an husband, who, from a knowledge of the usages of war, naturally trembled at the idea of her situation, should fortune, as it proved, desert his cause. The Princess Adeline is still in the bloom of youth, and possessed of charms sufficient to subdue the heart of an anchorite: think you, Chevalier, that such a form was to be placed at the mercy of a young hero, flushed with conquest, and whose will alone was law? I am sensible that Albert, now reflection has resumed its powers, would scorn to sully his own honour, by a base attempt upon that of a virtuous and defenceless woman; but Albert, in the moment of conquest, and in the moment of reflection, may justly be supposed two very different beings."

"You judge rightly," replied D'Armfeldt, "and I am rejoiced to find that you entertain so high an opinion of a man to whom I profess myself bound by every tie of gratitude and honour. Sternheim, I
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can read your thoughts at this declaration. You believe me the *slave* of Albert, ready to assist him in every action, however derogatory to his or my own honour. Time only can convince a man of your experience to the contrary, as I am sensible that, situated as I am, all the professions I can make would be received if not with total disbelief, yet with a jealous ear. Let time therefore be the touchstone of my present sincerity; it will not be long before we shall meet again, yet ere we part, let me remind you, that it is no difficult matter for a man possessed of integrity to act with fidelity to those to whom gratitude binds him, while at the same time he pays due respect to that person whom capricious fortune may have appointed as his future master. Farewell, remember this conversation."

Before Sternheim could recover from the astonishment into which an address so totally unexpected had thrown him, D'Armfeldt had pursued his walk; and by the direction which he appeared to take, seemed

to be going towards the convent of St. Veil. Sternheim now thought it extremely fortunate that he had obtained an interview with the Princess, prior to any message that Albert might think it necessary to send thither, as he doubted not but that D'Armfeldt was commissioned for that purpose. She would now be prepared for an answer, without experiencing that embarrassment which an uncertainty of the transactions that had latterly passed at Clagenfurth would naturally have occasioned. It had been the intention of Sternheim to have disseminated the intelligence respecting the unknown progeny of the late Prince, immediately on his return to the city; but he now determined to delay it until the arrival of D'Armfeldt, as should his conjectures have been correct respecting the mission of the Chevalier, he thought it highly probable that the Princess would mention to him the prior marriage of her late husband, and the consequences of it; an information that would come with a
better

better grace from her, and have greater effect than if it was propagated in a casual manner by himself.

Such were the meditations of Sternheim while pursuing his solitary walk towards the walls of Clagenfurth; yet at times they were interrupted by the recurrence to his mind, of the extraordinary conversation he had just held with the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, a conversation he found it difficult to reconcile with the ostensible situation he held in the service of Albert, or with the friendship he apparently professed for him; neither did his actions agree with the tenor of the discourse. Grown cautious by age, he thought it might be a plan formed to ensnare him, and to induce him, under the plausible pretence of its being serviceable to the parties concerned, to discover any secrets he might be in the possession of. However, as his utmost penetration could not at present pierce through the mysterious veil, he resolved to be more circumspect in his conduct than usual; and al-

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though it was his greatest wish to have contrived either an interview, or to have sent a message to the Chevalier Seckendorf, yet he nobly determined to sacrifice his own inclinations, rather than run the smallest hazard of endangering the safety of the young Rodolphus, or of adding to the misfortunes of the Princess Adeline by an indiscreet zeal.

The commands of Albert respecting Sternheim had been most faithfully obeyed by his emissaries; every action was minutely watched, but it was in vain that they endeavoured to detect him in any correspondence that could in the smallest degree afford a clue for the discovery of the infant. The visit to the convent was made known to Albert as soon as it happened, and it was chiefly to watch whether he returned from thence, or bent his course any other way, that the spies, whose appearance had so alarmed the sisterhood, were wandering around the environs. As Albert, however, made no doubt but that
Sternheim

Sternheim would make known to the Princess the safety of the young Rodolphus, which he judged she might possibly have been ignorant of, he artfully determined to take advantage of the circumstance, and by obliquely taking the merit of the discovery on himself, endeavour to pave the way for a reconciliation with the Princess. He therefore immediately dispatched the Chevalier D'Armfeldt on the embassy, to offer his congratulations on the safety of her son, which he trusted her antient domestic Sternheim had acquainted her with ; that he much lamented the cruel necessity which forced him to take up arms against the late Prince, but trusted that the good sense of the Princess would in time eradicate those impressions a late deplorable event must necessarily have impressed upon her mind ; and that, in the mean time, it would be his ambition to shew every respect both to herself and the young Rodolphus, whom, if she would permit him, it would be his pride to educate in a man-

ner suitable to the station he was born to fill.

Such were the subtle, the fallacious instructions given to the Chevalier, who, although he made no comments upon them, was sensible, from the high character he had heard of the Princess Adeline, that they would be received with the scorn they merited. D'Armfeldt had never seen the Princess; he was therefore rejoiced at an opportunity of beholding her, at a time, and on an occasion which would naturally call forth the energies of her mind, and display that firmness of character fame reported her to possess. On his name being announced at the convent, the Princess, knowing the rank he held in the establishment and favour of Albert, and having expected to receive some message from the conqueror, commanded him to be admitted. Upon his entrance into the apartment in which the Princess, attended by the abbess, was prepared to receive him, he was struck with such astonishment at the graceful, yet majestic

majestic figure of the Princess, that he could scarcely articulate the accustomed compliments. The Princess perceived his embarrassment, and in a firm tone requested to know what could occasion a visit from a friend of the conqueror of Clagenfurth?

“The conqueror,” replied D’Armfeldt, “if such he can be called, who is himself a captive, most sincerely laments the fatal necessity that enforced him to take up arms; but imperious honour admitted of no other resource; nor could Albert have appeared among the nobility of the empire, had he tamely submitted to the disgrace he suffered. Yet his success is attended with stings more poignant even than those he before experienced, when his mind reverts to the idea, that by revenging his own injuries, he has accumulated them tenfold on one of whose happiness he once fondly hoped he should have been the protector. Sensible of the error he has committed, he requests the indulgence of the Princess Adeline, while he submits the principality

of Clagenfurth to her disposal, and offers to her his sincere congratulations, that the young Rodolphus so fortunately escaped that dreadful day of fury and madness; and should it meet with the approbation of the Princess, he pledges himself to prove a faithful guardian, until such time as the age of the young Prince shall enable him to take the reins of government into his own hands."

During the speech of D'Armfeldt, the Princess maintained a dignified silence; no feminine emotions betrayed the interior agency of her mind, while listening to the insidious overtures that were made to her. If D'Armfeldt was surprised at his first approach to her presence, how much was that surprise increased, when he perceived a young and beautiful woman, who, instead of bewailing her fate with bitter lamentations, and calling on every power to avenge her injuries, calmly listened to the recital of them! He awaited her reply with anxious expectation, as notwithstanding the

the friendship he experienced for Albert. he could not avoid admiring the heroic fortitude of the lovely widow ; and from that instant he mentally resolved to protect her from any sinister designs, should such be meditated against her, even should he ultimately be obliged to desert the cause which he had hitherto maintained with the utmost zeal.

For a few moments after the conclusion of D'Armfeldt's address, the Princess paused, as if reflecting on the nature of the answer she should return. Her penetration easily discovered the drift of Albert's assumed generosity ; but she felt it as an additional insult, that he should esteem her of a disposition so light and capricious as to afford the most slender hopes to a man by whose revengeful arm a beloved husband had so recently fallen. Yet even this time might have conquered ; but the inhuman cruelty that followed the act itself, was so indicative of a naturally cruel and savage heart, as not to admit a shadow of hope.

It was true, and her heart had confessed it, that there was a time when Albert stood high in her estimation; nor would the chance of war have entirely obliterated it, had it been accompanied by honour. Impressed with these ideas, she determined to silence his hopes at once, if he had the boldness to entertain any, and to commit the care both of herself and of her beloved Rodolphus to the protection of Providence; she therefore returned the following answer:—

“I will not pretend to misunderstand the tenor of Albert’s proposals, or by a too fastidious sense of propriety, defer giving a positive and decisive reply to them. I know not whether you are acquainted with the earlier life of the person whose cause you now espouse; if you are, it will be needless for me to revert to that period.”

D’Armfeldt bowed an acquiescence, and the Princess proceeded.

“The honour of Albert was then without a stain, and an alliance with his family
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would not have degraded even that of De Mountfort. But I now look up with gratitude to that Providence which ordained I should escape an union that would have embittered my future days, and left me nothing but sorrow and anguish. The cruelty, the savage ferocity of Albert, was then concealed under the specious covering of heroism ; but no sooner did a fancied insult rouse his passions, than they blazed forth with a fury that not even the entreaties of his dearest friends could controul ; and on what object was this fury exerted ? On the lifeless body of the husband of that woman whom he affected to love, and whom he still dares insult with a repetition of it. If such is his conception of my ideas, happy is it for him that fate so early separated us. Tell Albert, that Adeline, Princess of Clagenfurth, will accept of no offers that an usurper can make ; tell him likewise, that she is not so destitute of friends as to commit the safety of her infant to the protection of the murderer of his father, and
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that she trusts that her wrongs will call forth an avenging power, that shall hurl him from the fancied security he possesses."

"I admire," replied D'Armfeldt, "this generous animosity, even against a friend I respect; and it is this admiration that prompts me to submit to your consideration, whether a direct refusal to all the offers of Albert, may not tend to exasperate him beyond all bounds; and should his emissaries, who are numerous and vigilant, succeed in the task they are engaged in, the discovery of the young Rodolphus, he might be tempted to revenge the slight of the mother on the innocent infant."

"Hold, Sir," exclaimed the Princess, "I perceive your design; but think not that I have formed my resolution rashly, or have not reflected on the consequences, should such an event happen, which you predict; but even then, Albert will learn, that although the heart of his victim may break, it will never bend; nor could you, with all your ingenuity, have afforded me a
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juster ground for my refusal, than in the bare hint of the savage threat you have just mentioned, as it proves that the actions of Albert are not the result of instantaneous fury, but of innate deliberate cruelty."

"I should not presume to urge you, Madame," replied D'Armfeldt, "was I not convinced that Albert, for reasons most powerful, is sincere in the offers respecting the young Rodolphus; for, believe me, Madame, although a friend of Albert's, I shall never countenance a dishonourable action in him. It is my sincere wish to serve the Princess of Clagenfurth, at the same time to promote the welfare of my friend. Hereafter you may prove my sincerity; I ask not your confidence but as I deserve it; and although my avocations may prevent my interfering openly, yet, by the help of Sternheim, I may be able to afford that assistance no other person could, with any hopes of success, offer. Permit me at least to moderate your refusal to more gentle terms."

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“Although hypocrisy, Sir,” rejoined the Princess, “is sometimes deemed politic, yet I consider it as a vice of so detestable a growth, as not for a moment to be admitted into a heart that aims at being accounted virtuous. They who endeavour to deceive, deserve themselves to be deceived; neither can I consider it of any advantage; the mask must be in time withdrawn, and the real truth appear; then indeed the punishment that disappointment might inflict, would be just; neither ought the sufferer to murmur. There is, however, Chevalier, a shew of friendship in your actions that demands my thanks; whether real or fallacious, I am yet to learn; if the former, it will be received with pleasure; if the latter, I shall experience no disappointment. Thus far, therefore, I will concede to you; couch my refusal in what terms you please, so as they are peremptory.”

“I feel myself highly flattered,” replied the Chevalier, “at the confidence the Princess

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cess of Clagenfurth deigns to place in me, and shall implicitly obey her commands; and I trust that the days of calamity will be succeeded by those of satisfaction."

D'Armfeldt made his obeisance, and was about to withdraw, when the Princess, seeming as if she had just recollected herself, said, "There is a circumstance, of which perhaps Albert is uninformed, which may have some weight on his future operations and intentions. Rodolphus is not the sole heir remaining to the principality of Clagenfurth, as should any sinister misfortune happen to him, another claimant, of equal affinity to the late Prince, is in existence, and would prove a serious obstacle to the ambitious views of any pretender."

"Madame!" exclaimed D'Armfeldt, with unaffected astonishment; but recovering himself, humbly said, "May I take the liberty of requesting a solution of this mystery."

To this request the Princess condescendingly replied, by relating to him the history

tory of the Prince's prior marriage, together with all the attendant circumstances, except mentioning the country to which the young Princess had been sent for her education. During the relation, the countenance of D'Armfeldt discovered an anxiety which greatly surprised both the Princess and the abbess, who, although they could not avoid perceiving it, let it pass unobserved. But their astonishment was considerably heightened, when, at the conclusion, the Chevalier addressing the former with respect, blended with satisfaction, informed his auditors, that the narrative he had just heard, while it afforded him a pleasure no words could describe, bound him by an indissoluble tie to the family of the Prince of Clagenfurth; at present he dared not be more explicit, but the Princess might rest assured, that, from that moment, not only her welfare, but that of the young Princess and Rodolphus, should be the objects of his unceasing attention. D'Armfeldt then taking an hasty leave, quitted
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the apartment, before either the Princess or the abbess could recover from the surprise his unaccountable and mysterious speech had thrown them into. Various were the conjectures that passed between them after the departure of D'Armfeldt, and they ransacked their imagination in vain, to discover a probable cause for the sudden attachment of the Chevalier ; but although they were unable to form any precise judgment on the occasion, yet the mind of the Princess became impressed with a greater belief of the intended rectitude of his conduct towards her, as his emotions were too genuine to be the offspring of design or hypocrisy ; and it was remarked with the greatest satisfaction by the abbess, who most affectionately loved and respected her royal protegee, not for the adventitious superiority of birth, but for those splendid virtues she possessed, that the visit of the Chevalier, and the circumstances attending it, had diffused a greater serenity over the mind of the Princess, than she had experienced

rienced since she sought the protection of those walls. Nor did Adeline herself deny the charge; before that period the prospect around her appeared dark and gloomy; no cheering ray illumined the dreary path to direct her to security, or prevent her from falling down the precipices of destruction; one beam, however, had now pierced through the cloud, and Hope, although distant and uncertain, gladdened the scene. The judicious remarks also of the abbess tended very much to assist her in regaining that strength of mind which the late disasters had weakened, but not overcome; and a short period beheld her not only restored to her former health and beauty, but to that energetic firmness of mind which bade defiance to tyranny and oppression. The occurrences of the few preceding days had withdrawn the veil of uncertainty respecting Rodolphus, and the important discovery made by Sternheim had opened a wide field for action. For the present, however, she determined

to remain passive, and to curb her maternal wishes with so tight a rein, as not to suffer her eagerness to obtain a knowledge of the retreat chosen for Rodolphus to overcome the prudential motives of his concealment.

The Chevalier D'Armfeldt no sooner found himself without the walls of the convent, than he recapitulated in his mind the occurrences of the day. They had been such as the most fervid imagination could not have presupposed, and although they had afforded him the most exquisite satisfaction, yet when reflection resumed its sway, he found himself involved in difficulties, which, to overcome with honour, would prove a task of no easy accomplishment. To the friendship of Albert he was indebted for that rank in the world which he held; honour therefore attached him to his interests; still he determined never to assist him in acts of tyranny and oppression; and so paradoxical are sometimes the wishes of man, that while he would have defended his friend

friend at the certain loss of his own life, yet he wished, at the same time, that that friend would afford him a sufficient reason to abandon his cause ; so great was the transition that a few hours had occasioned in the sentiments of D'Armfeldt. Intent on planning schemes to assist the Princess, without swerving in his duty to Albert, he arrived within sight of the gates of Clagenfurth, even before he supposed that he had left the environs of the convent. He wished if possible to see Sternheim, and to have some conversation with him, before he gave an account of his embassy to Albert, for which purpose he bent his steps towards a private entrance at the opposite end of the town from the principal gate. His design, however, was interrupted by the impatience of Albert, who, knowing from his emissaries that Sternheim had been at the convent, was so impatient to hear something of the Princess, that he ordered him to be brought immediately before him. The information, however, that he
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received from Sternheim was too trite to afford him any satisfaction ; and dismissing him with a degree of anger, occasioned by his chagrin, he himself watched the road leading from the convent, that he might have the earliest notice of D'Armfeldt's return. It was with the greatest pleasure that he perceived his near approach ; but seeing him deviate from the usual way, which he was fearful would procrastinate his interview with him some time longer, he immediately dispatched a messenger to meet him, and require his instant attendance. This hasty summons obliged D'Armfeldt to change his measures, and with apparent readiness he followed his conductor to the presence of Albert.

“ My impatience,” said the latter immediately on his entrance, “ of gaining intelligence of your reception at the convent, was too great to allow you to lengthen the distance between us, as I perceived it was your intention to have entered the city by the postern-gate. Tell me, have you seen
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the Princess? How does she look? Is she——”

“A truce, my friend,” exclaimed D’Armfeldt smiling, “with all these questions; it is impossible for me to answer them all at once; but to satisfy you as well as I can, the Princess is as beautiful as ever; that, you know, includes every thing, health, et cetera, et cetera.”

“Ah, D’Armfeldt! it is easily seen that you have never experienced the tortures and anxieties of love.”

“True, my Lord,” retorted D’Armfeldt, “nor the presumption.”

“Presumption, D’Armfeldt!”

“Excuse the freedom of a friend,” rejoined D’Armfeldt; “but can Albert conceive the idea that the Princess of Clagenfurth, whom he has so lately injured in the most essential point, can ever entertain an affection for him, without meriting the epithet of presumptuous?”

“You are totally unacquainted with the nature of women,” replied Albert; “violent
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lent grief never makes a lasting impression, but at the same time, as it debilitates the mind, it makes a more easy transition to that sensibility which readily receives the effusions of a softer passion; more especially when at a former period the presumptuous mortal, as you term him, may have created some degree of interest in the heart of the woman who is the subject of his wishes. But say, in what manner was you received?" -

"If," replied D'Armfeldt, "you estimate the measure of your hopes according to the definition you have just made, you will have little cause to congratulate yourself by the manner of my reception. I confess that I expected to have beheld a woman harassed by misfortunes, and almost broken-hearted at the scenes she had so lately encountered. How much therefore was I surprised, when, on my arrival at the apartment of the Princess, where, attended by the abbess, she was awaiting my approach, I found a female whose appearance at once struck the

beholder with a sensation bordering on reverential awe! When I entered on the subject of my embassy, not the smallest appearance of feminine weakness escaped her; her expressions were dignified, and proved that she possessed a mind that rose superior to the malice of her fate. To the offers I was commissioned to make, she gave a respectful, yet decided refusal; neither, although I ventured to hint how prejudicial such conduct might eventually prove to the interests of the young Rodolphus, could she be persuaded to swerve from her determination, but observed that the fortunes of the house of De Mountfort were not sunk so low as to need the protection of the conqueror of Clagenfurth."

"By Heavens, D'Armfeldt," exclaimed Albert, "every word you utter serves only to add fuel to a flame that already blazes with almost irresistible force; it is now that I glory in my attachment, since the object of my ambition rises as superior in the nobler qualities of the mind, as she is
pre-eminent

pre-eminent in exterior beauty. Adeline, the lovely Adeline, must and shall be mine."

"I am sorry, Albert," said D'Armfeldt, interrupting him, "that your passion so far drowns your reason, as to prevent the consideration of the difficulty, not to say the impolicy of the pursuit. Could you with the hand of the Princess secure a right to her dominions, you might urge the plea of ambition; but to this Rodolphus is a bar not to be overlooked."

"Is Rodolphus immortal?" cried Albert hastily.

"I perceive the drift of your question," returned D'Armfeldt; "but I have a tale to relate, which, even should any casualty happen to Rodolphus, will still encrease rather than diminish the difficulties and distance between your hopes and the realization of them. Did you ever hear of a marriage that the late Prince of Clagenfurth contracted some time prior to his union with Adeline de Mountfort?"

"A marriage!" exclaimed Albert; "ne-

ver. I recollect a report that was circulated some few years ago, that the Prince kept a mistress, in such entire seclusion as not even to admit his most intimate friends to her acquaintance: whether he was actuated to this conduct by jealousy, or by shame, was frequently a matter of dispute among his friends; and this, I suppose, has given rise to the report of this pretended marriage; pretended I am certain it must be, as the Prince was too proud to form a serious alliance with a person however fascinating, who was so much beneath him as the female alluded to was supposed to be."

During these observations, a flush, as if of anger and resentment, crossed the countenance of D'Armfeldt, though unperceived by his chief; it was, however, only momentary; and D'Armfeldt quickly recovering himself, soon discovered to his astonished auditor the fact he had so peremptorily doubted; for the letter to the abbess, of which D'Armfeldt had been informed, rendered it impossible not to admit the reality of
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of the circumstance. No sooner had D'Armfeldt finished his relation, and given answers to the various questions which Albert put to him, than a total silence ensued ; and buried in deep reflection, which his friend did not think proper to interrupt, the former seemed unconscious that he was subject to observation. But the various emotions which alternately discovered themselves in his countenance, plainly indicated that the intelligence created him considerable embarrassment. Unwilling to disturb the reverie into which he appeared to have fallen, D'Armfeldt, whose thoughts had not been unemployed, retreated to a window in the apartment that, overlooking the city, gave a distant view of the convent in which the Princess Adeline had taken refuge ; this was a discovery he had never before made, and he now readily guessed why Albert had made choice of this room, in preference to the many others that were infinitely superior both in size and elegance of appearance. But this little incident,

trifling as it might appear, gave him considerable uneasiness, as it proved to him the great extent to which Albert carried his infatuation ; and he dreaded the result of a passion apparently so deeply rooted, and which, without a crime, was so unlikely to be successful. His mind was involved in a chaos of perplexities, and wandering in a labyrinth of uncertainty, when he was suddenly roused to recollection by Albert, who exclaimed, " D'Armfeldt, prepare to attend me ; I will see the Princess of Clagenfurth myself, and inquire into the particulars of this strange history ; her interests are involved in the discovery ; and I flatter myself that I shall be doing the injured Adeline an essential service, by offering my interference to investigate this report with the utmost minuteness."

" My Lord," said D'Armfeldt, in a tone which rather surprised the chief, " the Princess of Clagenfurth does not esteem herself injured ; and the only resentment she feels is, that the Prince had not permitted her to

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pay the attention of a mother to his former child. Your intended visit, my Lord, will not, I am convinced, be productive of the smallest good, but will rather tend to exasperate the Princess ; neither do I think that even the conqueror of Clagenfurth would be admitted within the walls of the convent of St. Veil."

The eyes of Albert were fixed on those of his friend, during this speech, with an earnestness that seemed intended to penetrate into the most secret repository of his heart. D'Armfeldt shrunk not from the scrutiny, but met the inquiring gaze with a steadiness that disconcerted the jealous chief, who had entertained a suspicion, improbable as was the idea, that D'Armfeldt himself dared to indulge a passion for the Princess, as he could not conceive that his unusual eagerness in her concerns could possibly proceed from any other motive. The calmness, however, that pervaded his countenance, obliged him to dismiss the suspicion ; but as he foresaw a determined

opposition to his wishes, policy whispered him to temporize, as on D'Armfeldt's assistance alone, he could depend with any certainty ; he therefore determined on making a merit of giving up his intentions to the advice of his friend, and accordingly thanked him for restraining the impetuosity of his temper, with the usual expressions of kindness and friendship, promising that if he did not entirely give up his design, he would at least consider it with calmness, and acquaint him with his determination before he put it into execution.

The Chevalier easily perceived the motives of Albert's ready acquiescence, but satisfied with having obtained a temporary reprieve for the Princess, he made suitable acknowledgments to the chief, for his condescension in listening to his advice ; and they separated in all appearance with undiminished friendship.

No sooner was D'Armfeldt disengaged from his attendance on Albert, than he hastened

tened to find Sternheim, whose assistance was absolutely necessary to him, in order to perfect those intentions he had already formed in his imagination. From the conduct he had formerly experienced from him, when commissioned to bring him before the conqueror of Clagenfurth, he was convinced of the steadiness of his principles, and his sincere attachment to the family of the late Prince; he made no doubt, therefore, if he could obtain his confidence so far as to assure him that he was equally as ready to serve the Princess as himself, that he would be a most useful and powerful auxiliary in his future proceedings. Neither did he doubt of success, as he was in possession of a secret, the confiding of which to Sternheim would assuredly convince him of his sincerity. Fraught with this expectation, he approached the house in which the latter had taken up his abode, and which, in order to be less observed, was at the very skirts of the city. On inquiring for Sternheim, he

had the mortification to find that he was from home, but hearing at the same time that his absence was not expected to be long, he determined to wait his return. Near an hour however elapsed, yet Sternheim did not make his appearance; and D'Armfeldt, impatient of any further delay, prepared to quit the apartment in which he had been sitting, when the door opened, and instead of Sternheim, whom D'Armfeldt naturally thought was the intruder, Albert entered. The surprise they mutually experienced on encountering each other at a place so little expected by either, was so great as to occasion an involuntary start in both. In a few moments, however, each had recovered their self-possession, when Albert, with a sarcastic smile, congratulated his friend on the intimacy he had formed with a man of such well-known probity as Sternheim, not doubting but that his lessons would implant in his mind the moral duties both of friendship and loyalty.

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“My Lord,” replied D’Armfeldt, “I perfectly understand your insinuation; neither shall I attempt to enlighten the blindness of prejudice. I confess, my Lord, the obligations I have been under to you, but a suspicion of my honour cancels all. D’Armfeldt can be the friend of Albert, but will never be the slave.”

At the conclusion of this spirited speech, the Chevalier, making an obeisance to his chief, whose emotions were variously excited by the firmness of the tone in which he had been so unexpectedly answered, was on the point of leaving the apartment, when Albert, who recollected how disadvantageous it would be to all his prospects, should he be deprived of a friend in whose breast he had hitherto been accustomed to deposit both his hopes and his fears, caught him by the hand, saying, “Forgive, D’Armfeldt, the impetuosity of the moment; my mind, agitated by the unexpected intelligence that you brought me respecting the long-concealed marriage

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riage of the late Prince of Clagenfurth, had for the instant lost that bias which should regulate its motions, and too readily admitted a suspicion that even the friend of my earlier days was become an enemy to my repose ; and you must allow that finding you here almost immediately after so momentous a communication, apparently waiting the return of a man who cannot entertain those sentiments for the destroyer of his late benefactor as are friendly, was to an already irritated mind an additional source of disquiet ; but let me assure you that every impression made is entirely eradicated, as I make no doubt but that my friend can explain this accidental meeting, so as not only to give perfect satisfaction, but even raise him higher in the opinion of his chief."

" Had you, my Lord," replied D'Armfeldt, at the same time returning the friendly pressure of the hand that Albert had taken, " deigned to have made this inquiry before the cruel, and I must add unjust,

just, insinuation - escaped your lips, you would have saved me the anguish of insulted honour, and yourself the humiliation of deprecating the offence. Believe me, my Lord, while Albert pursues the dictates of honour, the sword, the life of D'Armfeldt is at his command. Neither shall I now refuse that explanation which a too hasty resentment perhaps was on the eve of burying in oblivion. The prior marriage of the late Prince of Clagenfurth not only created in me the utmost astonishment, but also an uncontrollable desire to be made acquainted with the particulars of it, a knowledge which I was convinced would be beneficial to all parties; and I flattered myself that I should have an opportunity of giving you fresh proofs of my zeal for your service, by procuring the intelligence. From the specimens I have already seen of the disposition of Sternheim, I am sensible that no motives of fear, nor the dread of death itself, would compel him to disclose those secrets, the
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discovery of which he judged might be injurious to the family of his benefactor. As he alone was privy to the transaction, prior to the discovery of it by the letter of the Prince to the abbess, from him only can any intelligence be gained. Sensible, as I before observed, that terror would not procure it, I determined to wait upon him, under the pretence of a message from the Princess, and which indeed is really the case ; it was an opportunity which might never occur again, and a delay might have prevented my taking the advantage of it. This introduction I trusted would prove the means of my ingratiating myself into his favour, and perhaps confidence, particularly when he found that the Princess entertained a good opinion of me, and had not hesitated entrusting me with a message of some importance to her. By this means I hoped that in time I might obtain from him not only the particulars of the marriage, but even the present residence of the young Princess, a circumstance of equal

equal importance both for the Princess Adeline and yourself. Such, Sir, were the sentiments by which I was actuated, you must consequently imagine how much my feelings were hurt, when my intentions were so cruelly misinterpreted."

"Enough, D'Armfeldt, say no more ; I am perfectly satisfied with your explanation: from this moment let the unfortunate misunderstanding be buried in oblivion. I confess it was a similar intention that brought me here, but I esteem it a fortunate circumstance that I was anticipated, as my impetuosity at a refusal, which would probably have been the case, might have eventually prevented the important discovery. But I think you hinted that you had a commission from the Princess to deliver to Sternheim."

"Ah, my Lord !" replied D'Armfeldt, "I perceive the nature of that insidious question ; suspicion is again at work ; but if you cannot rest satisfied with my honourable attachment to your interests, let
me

me again resume that situation from which your partiality raised me ; no murmurs shall escape my lips, except those occasioned by the reflection, that I am no longer esteemed worthy of the friendship of my patron. If, my Lord, you are convinced of my honour, you must be convinced that I should not undertake any commission prejudicial to your interests ; and consequently that it would be the highest breach of that honour, was I to disclose, even to my friend and chief, the commission I am entrusted with."

" D'Armsfeldt," replied Albert, " my mind is so unsettled, that I scarce know what I say ; once more forgive me, and let us drop the subject ; when you have executed the enviable trust imposed upon you, let me see you at the palace, till then adieu."

Albert immediately left the house, and returned to the palace ; his mind, however, was ill at ease ; and he retired to the interior of the apartments, giving express orders to
his

his attendants not to suffer him to be disturbed, or to admit any one except the Chevalier D'Armfeldt. Although he had succeeded in calming the agitation of his mind during the latter part of his conference at the house of Sternheim, yet now left to his reflection, it returned with double force. His imagination hastily ran over those scenes in which both himself and the Chevalier had been engaged in the earlier part of their lives, and on the most minute investigation, he could not find the smallest deviation from the strictest honour. But although he felt the injustice of his suspicions, still he could not avoid their making an impression upon his mind. The explanation which D'Armfeldt had given was certainly plausible, and yet he found himself impelled to distrust it. Amid this contrariety of ideas, the future appeared to him big with important events, and forgetting that he was alone, he exclaimed, "This then is the prelude to those misfortunes I have been threatened with; should they

they increase in horror, well might the wrinkled hag assert, that not even the courage I possessed would scarcely be able to surmount them ; for oh ! what more dreadful can occur, than to be obliged to distrust that friendship which for so many years has been my consolation in the most urgent emergencies ? Rodolphus, thou art already revenged ; but it is not yet too late to expiate my inhumanity. The restoration of the injured heir will appease the vengeance denounced against me, and this heart, once the seat of quietude and happiness, shall regain that serenity which a fatal impulse has overpowered. Perhaps even Adeline too may receive a repentant victim to fury and ambition ; oh that D'Armfeldt was returned ! this would be a commission he would execute with fidelity ; it shall be so."

During this soliloquy, Albert paced the apartment with disordered steps, and his heated imagination had almost convinced him of the sincerity of his intentions, when
his

his meditations were interrupted by the entrance of one of the attendants, whose countenance sufficiently indicated that his intrusion was occasioned by a matter of importance. Albert started at the interruption, and in a voice that testified his rage at this disobedience of his orders, asked the trembling menial how he dared to approach uncalled.

The affrighted domestic, terrified at the anger which he dreaded would fall heavily upon him, endeavoured to articulate that a person was just arrived at the Castle, who would take no denial, but demanded an immediate interview with the conqueror of Clagenfurth, such were his expressions: "It was in vain, my Lord," continued he, "that we informed him you was retired to your repose, and had given express orders not to be disturbed on any account; he insisted on being obeyed; and his countenance assumed an air so determined and majestic, that I no longer dared to deny his request."

"Is

“Is the Chevalier D’Armfeldt in the Castle?” demanded Albert, without giving any answer to the servant.

“No, my Lord.”

“Send for him instantly,” said Albert, with the utmost impatience; “he is at Sternheim’s, near the postern-gate.”

“But what answer shall I return to the stranger?” asked the servant.

Albert paused; he was undetermined how to act; and an involuntary sensation, though not of fear, crept through his veins as he remained for some few instants in deep consideration, while the domestic beheld him in mute astonishment. A casual glance, however, which he cast on the servant’s countenance, roused him from inaction, and he instantly recovered that firmness of mind which nothing but the agitation he had so lately given way to, could have shaken. “Shew the stranger,” said he, “into the apartment of ceremony, and tell him that Albert will attend him immediately: but haste and seek the Chevalier; let several
messengers

messengers be sent different ways, in case he should have left the house of Sternheim, as his presence is of importance to me.”

The servant immediately retired to obey the commands of his master, and accordingly conducted the stranger to the hall of ceremony, while he hastened to execute the remaining part of his orders.

In the mean time, Albert, attended by several of his household, entered the hall, where the stranger was waiting with no little impatience for his arrival. Having paid the first compliments, and seated himself, surrounded by his domestics, he requested the name and business of the stranger, which he supposed must be of more than common urgency, as he had been so peremptory in his demands of an audience. While asking these questions, Albert perceived that the countenance of the stranger underwent various changes, and from the fury that flashed from his eyes, he readily guessed that his mission was not of a friendly nature;

nature; he therefore awaited his reply with anxiety. After a few moments, the stranger looking round the apartment with a smile indicative of contempt, said, "When I demanded an interview with the conqueror of Clagenfurth, I thought to have found a hero, who would have disdained to have entrenched himself in the forms of ceremony, and thus force a person, for all he at present knows, his equal, if not his superior in point of birth, to disclose his sentiments before the menials of his household. Is the conscience of Albert so tremendously awake as to dread the fury of an assassin, or the revenge of injured innocence, that he dares not grant a private audience? If such is the result of his ambitious views, if such is the consequence of those acts of valour and inhumanity, that is the theme of every tongue, the injured may rest in peace, for they are abundantly revenged."

"And who are you," cried the enraged
Albert,

Albert, "who dares asperse my name, even within those walls, that acknowledge me as their master?"

"Examine well your own heart," replied the stranger calmly, "and see whether or not it will acquit me of aspersion." Albert trembled at the appeal; he hastily put his hand before his eyes, and seemed to await the further reproaches of the unknown, with a mind of despairing sullenness.

"I perceive your confusion," rejoined the stranger; "dismiss this shew of pride and pomp, and you shall be satisfied as to my intentions of demanding this interview."

Albert waved his hand, and the domestics immediately obeyed the signal, wondering what would be the event of this extraordinary intrusion.

As soon as the stranger perceived that the apartment was clear, he advanced towards Albert, who still maintained the position he had thrown himself into, and in a firm

firm and manly tone exclaimed, "Albert, in me behold Theodore de Mountfort."

Albert started from his reverie, and gazing upon him with a look of incredulity, seemed to examine every feature, in order to call to his recollection any traces of that family, a principal member of which the stranger asserted himself to be ; it is true that he fancied there was some resemblance to the Princess Adeline, but it was so faint as scarcely to be called a resemblance ; he hesitated therefore whether or not he should credit the assertion, as it was well known to him that Theodore, the real brother of the Princess, had been lost to his family ever since he was ten years old, and notwithstanding every possible inquiry, had never been heard of since ; yet now, at this critical instant, a person, certainly of a noble mein, and whose whole appearance indicated a superior birth, suddenly appeared, and declared himself to be the long-lost youth.

Theodore

Theodore, for so in future must we call the stranger, perceived the uncertainty of the chief, and accosting him in a tone more mild than he had hitherto assumed, said, "Albert, I perceive the incredulity that arises in your mind respecting the identity of my person, and before I acquaint you with the purport of my business here, will, by making known to you the events that have happened to me since I was taken from the Castle of the Count de Mountfort, my father, prove myself to be the brother of the Princess of Clagenfurth, and the real but unfortunate representative of the house of De Mountfort.

"How!" exclaimed Albert, "is the Count de Mountfort no more?"

"It is but a few days," replied Theodore with a gloomy ferocity, "since he expired in my arms, leaving me the heir to his possessions, and to his revenge; but the cause of his death," added he, perceiving that Albert was again going to interrupt him, "will be amply elucidated in my history."

At that instant the Chevalier D'Armfeldt entered, and perceiving a stranger, was about to withdraw, when Albert, apologizing in an hesitating manner to Theodore for the interruption, introduced him to the astonished Chevalier, at the same time requesting that his friend might be permitted to be present at the relation of his adventures.

Theodore, looking at D'Armfeldt with an emotion he could ill conceal, replied to the equal surprise of both his auditors, "that it gave him the sincerest pleasure to be introduced to a man whom he had long since been taught to admire, and whose character stood so high in the estimation of the world, for a scrupulous sense of honour and propriety ; far from having any objection to the presence of the Chevalier, I should think myself happy in reposing the most secret emotions of my heart in his breast ; and I look forward with confidence that this unexpected but fortunate meeting, will be the means of obviating many difficulties

difficulties that, from the nature of my business here, might otherwise have prevented such a conclusion of my mission as would in future be beneficial to all concerned."

D'Armfeldt bowed to this unexpected compliment, while the mind of Albert was again agitated with a thousand ideas that the enthusiastic speech of Theodore suddenly gave rise to. His suspicions of the Chevalier, scarcely dormant, were again roused with greater force; and it was with difficulty he could conceal the impression made upon him; he succeeded, however, at last, and requested Theodore to begin his tale, which, after a few moments thought, he entered upon as follows:—

"It is unnecessary for me to give any description of a family so well known throughout the whole German empire, as that of De Mountfort, or to enumerate the virtues of the last possessor of that title, or those of the amiable Countess—virtues that might have reasonably been supposed to have been an insurmountable barrier

against the malicious designs of a concealed but inveterate enemy. To that malice I owe the dangers I have experienced, but through which a protecting Providence has guided me with safety, although too late, except to behold the last agonies of an afflicted father, and to receive his blessing and final instructions. My mother was, as you well know, a daughter of a junior branch of the family of De Mountfort, who in case of my father's death without male heirs, would become both the possessors of the title and the extensive possessions belonging to it. It was therefore with the utmost satisfaction that they received the overtures of my father for a matrimonial connexion with their daughter, as it was most likely to prove the means of preserving the estate in the same family, should the marriage be attended with the consequences naturally to be expected from it. Their hopes were not disappointed, and few years elapsed before myself and Adeline encreased the happiness of the Count and

and Countess. The latter had one brother, two years younger than herself, but with whom she had always lived in the habits of sisterly affection; and no one seemed more rejoiced at the bright prospects that awaited her than the young Baron D'Erlach. I have since been informed, that at my birth he discovered such extravagant symptoms of joy as was the surprise even of his own family, that he insisted on performing the office of godfather, and after the ceremony was concluded, gave a most magnificent entertainment, which ended with a tournament. These exterior marks of satisfaction so completely obtained for him the regard of the Count and Countess de Mountfort, that from that period the Castle of De Mountfort might be with more propriety called his home than his own paternal dwelling. In this manner several years past, with little variety, except the birth of Adeline, the present Princess of Clagenfurth, an event which my uncle again made a pretence of shewing his re-

gard for the family. I should have observed, however, that prior to this, his own father had paid the debt of nature, and he had become possessed of no inconsiderable property ; but as his mother still existed, he made no alteration in his manner of living, but continued a resident at the Castle of De Mountfort, much to the satisfaction of the Count and Countess, who were become so habituated to his company, that the loss of it would have been esteemed by them a serious misfortune.

While the whole family were thus caring a man to whom they looked up with gratitude and affection, one froward heart alone dared to dissent from the general opinion. It was myself ; for whether it was an intuitive presentiment of what I was hereafter doomed to suffer from one to whom I was constantly taught to look up to with reverence and respect, or from any other motive which I cannot define, certain it is, that from the instant, nay, even before it might be supposed that the faculties

ties of youth could distinguish between love and hatred, the latter sentiment was forcibly impressed on my mind against my uncle, which not even his attempts to ingratiate himself with me, by those little attentions that are usually so gratifying to the infantine mind, could diminish. As my ideas expanded, the stronger my original dislike grew; and indeed it was often so very apparent, that I received very severe lectures on the subject, both from the Count and Countess. I had nearly arrived at my tenth year, when, notwithstanding the conduct I had constantly pursued towards my uncle, he determined to celebrate that era, being the half period, as he termed it, of my infancy, with the same magnificence as he had my birth. The idea met with the approbation of the Count and Countess, and notwithstanding my dislike, I felt myself interested in the magnificent preparations that were making, and looked forward to the time with no small impatience. At length it arrived; the Castle

was completely filled with the nobility and their attendants, who were invited upon the occasion, either to take a part in the different amusements, or to be spectators of them. Martial music announced the beginning of the entertainment, and my uncle appeared busy in his attendance on those who had honoured him by their company. Still there was an agitation in his manner, whenever he addressed me, which he did frequently during the amusements, that I could not account for; and indeed so apparent was it at one time, that I could not forbear asking him if he was not well? To this question he gave a vague answer, which however quieted my apprehensions, and I entered into the various pleasures with all the avidity of inexperienced youth. These amusements were kept up with spirit during the whole day; neither was the night destined to put an end to them, as, on a signal given, the extensive gardens belonging to the Castle suddenly became illuminated, and emitted a
splendor

splendor that even rivalled the mid-day sun. While I was admiring the effect produced by this assemblage of light, I was informed that the Count required my attendance at a different part of the garden; I immediately obeyed the summons, and leaving my uncle, with whom I had been talking, hastened to join my father. On passing through a narrow avenue, which, either by accident or design, had been left in almost total darkness, I was suddenly seized by two men, whose countenances were disguised in masks, and who instantly putting a gag in my mouth, and blinding my eyes, conveyed me away with the utmost rapidity. How long I was forced to travel in this manner I am ignorant; at length, however, the gag was taken away, but at the same time I was threatened with instant death, even if I spoke, or endeavoured to raise the least alarm. Terror, however, had so deprived me of utterance, that there was no occasion of making use of these threats. Still my eyes re-

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mained blinded, and I was perfectly ignorant of the road I was travelling. Several days passed in this manner, during which time I had crossed a considerable river. At length the liberty of sight was restored to me, and I found myself surrounded by several men, who were totally strangers to me, but whose appearance sufficiently indicated their profession. In short, I had so frequently heard a description of banditti, that I became immediately sensible of being in the power of such; the shock I received on the discovery was more than I could bear; a faint dizziness seized upon my senses, and I fell insensible at the feet of one who appeared the chief. On my recovery I found myself in a comfortable apartment, and close by the bedside sat a female, who appeared awaiting my return to reason with some anxiety, as immediately on the restoration of my senses, she discovered such satisfaction as convinced me I had made some interest in her heart. As my disposition was naturally open to acts
of

of kindness, I received her attention with so much placidity as proved how sensible I was of it ; and from that instant she became not only my nurse, but my friend. The agitation I had undergone, and the rapidity with which I had been hurried along, had caused a fever, from which the care of my female friend, and a good constitution alone, could have recovered me. Notwithstanding the attention I received, and the friendly disposition that appeared in the chief towards me, still I could not obtain the smallest intelligence respecting the outrage that had been offered me ; and to the various questions that at different times I ventured to make, a determined silence was observed. The place in which I was detained appeared an immense cavern, situated in an unfrequented part of a large forest, but rendered extremely difficult of access by the dangerous precipices that surrounded it, the interstices between which were so extremely narrow, that scarcely one person at a time could pass ; and these

were so strictly guarded, that it was impossible either for any one to escape, or for the residents to be surprised by an enemy. My mind was naturally strong, and the passion of fear was unknown to me but by name; neither was I startled at those imaginary ideas which superstition so frequently give rise to; undaunted I wandered through the dark recesses; neither did the hopes of obtaining my liberty once forsake me, although the probability of it was so greatly against me. Thus passed several years, the occurrences of which, as they are not immediately relative to myself, I shall pass over. I was nearly eighteen when the person who had been appointed to watch my conduct, was one morning brought home desperately wounded. Notwithstanding he had at times treated me with harshness, I could not see him in this condition without rendering him the assistance it was in my power to do, and his comrades perceiving my attention, and having other employments which occupied

cupied their time, at last left him solely to my care. The assiduity with which I seemed to administer to his ease affected him extremely, and one morning, the last indeed he remained in this world, he, to my utter astonishment, thus addressed me:—

‘Theodore, (for I still preserved that name) I feel that my life is drawing to a close; it has been a guilty one; yet still it is in my power to perform one act of justice, which I trust may, in some degree, be an atonement for my former transgressions. In me behold one of those who forced you from the Castle of De Mountfort, urged to it by the temptations held out to me by the brother of your mother; he it was that planned the whole scheme, in order that he might obtain the succession to the immense property of the Count, by a marriage with your sister Adeline, a scheme he had long formed in his mind, in which, from the great regard the Count and Countess expressed for him on all occasions, he made no doubt of succeeding, notwithstanding

standing the great disparity of their ages.

‘ Our orders, I confess, were of the most cruel nature, and we promised obedience ; but conceiving, upon reflection, that it might be more beneficial to us to permit you to live, as by that means we should have a constant hold upon your uncle, we brought you to this cavern. Fate, however, has ordained that he should not reap the benefit of his crimes, as he fell in a trivial encounter with some of those very people whose services he had often made use of for purposes the most atrocious : as a proof,’ continued he, ‘ of the fact, in that closet are the letters that passed between us, and the ultimate agreement ; take them ; hereafter you may find them of use.’ He now became faint, and although he partially recovered, yet his speech was gone, and he soon afterwards expired. I immediately took possession of the important papers, and secreted them in the best manner I could ; and in this I was assisted by
the

the female I have before mentioned, who had never ceased giving me such marks of her friendship as she could, without raising suspicion in the brotherhood. The time now became peculiarly irksome, and various were the plans I meditated for my escape, but all for a long time proved abortive. Fortune, however, weary of persecuting me, at last proved favourable, and I left the cavern where I had spent so many years of my youth, at a time when I least expected it. During the last two years, I had been trusted, in company with one of the society, occasionally to go in disguise to the neighbouring town, in order to procure certain articles which were materially wanted. It happened that not long after the death of the person I have mentioned, the whole society being absent on one of their accustomed expeditions, which was at some distance, these articles were wanted, and as there were none left in the cavern but those just sufficient to guard the different avenues, it was determined that I should repair
to

to the town alone, as from my long residence and apparent acquiescence in the mode of life, no idea of my escape was entertained. Still one difficulty remained, which was to get possession of the papers, without giving an intimation of my intention. This I fortunately effected, although I am certain that my female friend was aware of my design, as on parting from her, she whispered me to be cautious. As soon as I had got at a sufficient distance from observation, I immediately changed my course, and travelled with the utmost rapidity, until wearied with the great exertion, Nature was obliged to seek repose. I arrived in a mountainous country, and being fearful of discovery, had not ventured to approach any of those habitations which were so thinly scattered, and which seemed the residences of those shepherds whose flocks I could perceive grazing on the sides of the mountains. The night was dark and gloomy, and the wind howling through the adjacent forests, indicated a
tempest;

tempest; one of these huts was at no great distance, and not willing to encounter the fury of the threatening elements, I determined on risking the demand for shelter. Accordingly I approached the door, and requested admittance; a venerable personage soon made his appearance, and although he was evidently surprised at my figure, he hesitated not at granting my request, particularly as the rain began to pour in torrents, accompanied by tremendous bursts of thunder, which reverberating along the neighbouring mountains, seemed to shake them from their very foundations. Perceiving that I was faint and almost exhausted, the old man ordered such provision as his cottage supplied to be placed before me; and immediately two youths, apparently about my own age, and whom I had not before seen, entered, and in a most cheerful manner complied with the command; still I could perceive that their eyes were intently fixed upon me, whenever they thought they were unobserved. It was now that I recollected
what

what the hurry of my thoughts and the joy I experienced at my escape, had hitherto prevented me from doing—the dress I had on, which was such as was usually worn by the banditti. A sensation bordering on horror at the idea of what these innocent cottagers must suppose me, seized my imagination, and the blood mounted in torrents to my face, and overcame me with confusion. The old shepherd noticed the sudden alteration of my countenance, and kindly inquired if I found myself indisposed? A moment's reflection dictated my answer, and requesting his attention, I recounted to him the principal events of my life, not even concealing from him my real title. The astonishment of the old man was very great, but so plain and simple was my relation, that he could not doubt the truth of it, and addressing his grandsons, for such I now found the two youths were, he commanded them to be in readiness early on the next morning to attend me through the difficult part of the mountains, until I arrived
at

at a place of safety. Perceiving me unwilling to accept of this generous offer, he added to my astonishment by saying, 'My Lord, it is their duty to follow you, not only to the spot I have before mentioned, but wherever else you chuse to command, as they owe you obedience as your father's vassals.'—'Heavens,' I exclaimed, 'in what country am I, that I am thus recognized?'—'My Lord,' replied the old man, 'you are now in the mountains of Apenzel, in Switzerland.' This answer immediately satisfied my curiosity, as I was sufficiently acquainted with the concerns of my family, as to know that the house of De Mountfort possessed several districts in that country; and young as I was, I could not help admiring the providential chance that had conducted me to a place where, even should the banditti discover me, I possessed the means of resistance. But from this hazard I was assured by the old shepherd that I was perfectly safe, as for many years none of them had dared venture into these districts;

tricts; and it was the knowledge of this that occasioned so much surprise in the countenance of my friendly entertainers, when I first entered their cottage. Feeling myself safe from any pursuit, I slept sound, and awoke with the first rays of the sun, perfectly refreshed. A coarse but wholesome breakfast awaited my approach; and every thing being ready for our departure, I bade adieu to the old shepherd, and accompanied by his grandsons, proceeded upon my journey. A stranger to the beauties of nature, from the sight of which I had been so long excluded, every step I took rivetted my attention: as my good fortune would have it, my companions were endowed with understandings far superior to what could have been expected from youths bred up in so retired a situation; their remarks were sensible and acute; and I soon began to suspect that their grandfather, from whom they informed me that they had imbibed what little knowledge they were possessed of, had not been bred to the

the occupation of a shepherd : at that time, however, I could not obtain any information respecting him further than I was already acquainted with. We travelled but slowly, as I was anxious to examine a country of which I had heard so much talk during my juvenile years, and where my family possessed such considerable influence ; and although I most earnestly longed to ease the despair of a parent's heart, yet I could not resist the temptation which the opportunity offered me of gaining an intimate knowledge of the people, and of making myself known to the different branches of my family. It is not unknown to you," continued Theodore, particularly addressing himself to Albert, " that the family of De Mountfort is divided under three banners, the red, the white, and the black, and that the Count De Mountfort is the present chief of the latter, which is the most powerful of the three. Neither can you be ignorant, that although ambition and jealousy have sometimes unfortunately severed

severed the connexion, yet, that when an injury is received by either from an alien, that they nobly forget their private animosities, and unite against the daring encroacher of their rights. I was received by all as one risen from the grave; but to those who could not recollect my features, the documents I had so fortunately obtained were an ample proof of my identity, and the Baron D'Erlach was execrated by every branch. Finding myself safe from all dangers, I took leave of my two companions, whom I persuaded to return to their grandfather, as I was confident he must materially miss their services, promising that as soon as I had regained my paternal roof, they should be the first objects of my consideration; but events of which I was then ignorant, and was little prepared to expect, have hitherto prevented the accomplishment of this promise. After having satisfied my curiosity, and having been received as became a son of the Count De Mountfort, I proceeded towards the German

man dominions. The nearer I approached the abode of my infancy, the more my impatience increased to reach it. The way led through the Hartz Forest, and I had penetrated nearly to the centre of it, when an event happened, that although I was perfectly free from the trammels of superstition, could not avoid leaving a most serious impression on my mind. As I was journeying forward, ruminating on the past circumstances of my life, and anticipating the satisfaction that my unexpected return would cause my parents, I unconsciously deviated from the direct course, and before I was aware of my mistake, had entangled myself so far in the intricacies of the forest, as not to be able to regain the proper tract. While revolving what course it was best to pursue, I suddenly perceived a person walking slowly on before me, whose tottering step evinced the age of the traveller. I soon overtook the unknown, and to my surprise beheld a female, whose shrivelled countenance and tattered apparel denoted the

the extremest poverty. Hoping however to gain some intelligence that might be beneficial to me in the perplexity I was under, I made no hesitation to ask her by what means I could recover the road I had so unguardedly left? Instead of answering the question, she commanded me to follow her, and without knowing for what reason, I found myself insensibly compelled to obey the order. We proceeded onward in entire silence, as I dared not hazard addressing this incomprehensible being a second time, such an instantaneous effect had her presence on my senses. In this manner we travelled nearly a mile, when turning to the left, she bent her course more into the interior of the forest, and in a direct opposite point to that where the road I had been instructed to pursue lay. On perceiving this deviation, I paused, when my companion, from whose lips not a syllable had passed, seeing my irresolution, said, in a tone that vibrated through my whole frame, "Theodore De Mountfort, follow
me,

me, and fear not.”—I started at hearing myself addressed by that appellation, and could not but imagine that my guide was possessed of more than human knowledge. Hesitation however was at an end ; I obeyed the solemn injunction, and a few minutes brought us to her habitation. To attempt a description of what I beheld there, is far beyond my power ; suffice it that it was ornamented with all the implements which I had heard were made use of by those who were supposed to be possessed of supernatural agency. But what struck me most was a black cat of an immense size, and a raven, which perched on the chair near the table, seemed by its croaking to welcome the return of its mistress.”

A groan from Albert at this instant interrupted the narrative of Theodore, who, looking more intently at his countenance, perceived such an expression of horror as filled him with amazement, although he well knew the source from which it originated. The change did not escape the

Chevalier D'Armfeldt, who, willing to relieve his mind, proposed that the remainder of the young Count de Mountfort's narrative should be postponed until the morrow; but Albert suddenly recovering himself, haughtily desired him to proceed.

"I now made no doubt," said Theodore, "but that I was in the dwelling of one of those beings I have before mentioned. The hag perceiving me almost exhausted, instantly spread before me such food as her retirement afforded, and insisted on my taking a cordial, which would soon renovate my spirits. Although fear was a stranger to me, yet I felt myself a mere automaton in her presence, and obeyed her with the simplicity and readiness of an infant. I soon, however, perceived the effects of the elixir I had taken. My whole frame became invigorated, and a confidence I was destitute of before, gave such a turn to the animal spirits, as even to behold the horrors by which I was surrounded without emotion. I now began to be impatient

patient for the conclusion of this adventure; whether my hostess intuitively knew my thoughts or not, I am ignorant; however, rising from her homely seat, she commanded me to keep a strict silence, neither to make the smallest observation, whatever I might see or hear, adding, that if I was obedient, I should soon be satisfied as to the motives for which she had brought me to her retired situation. I promised obedience; when leaving me in total darkness, she instantly disappeared. In a few moments I heard the sound as if thunder rolled at a distance, and while I was listening to this strange phenomenon, for when I entered the house there was not the least appearance in the atmosphere to indicate such a circumstance, the ground shook under me with such violence as almost to throw me down, and I should certainly have rushed from the hut, had I not called to mind the injunctions of my conductress. The effect however was momentary, and after waiting a considerable time, involved

in total darkness, the sorceress, for such I now deemed her, returned; immediately the apartment was illuminated, and I beheld written in characters of fire, these words on the wall—" *Theodore de Mountfort, the destined avenger of injured innocence.*" Surprised, yet gratified at the sight, I gazed at the inscription with a feeling no language can describe, and my heart eagerly panted for the glorious opportunity promised me by fate. So rapid were my sensations that my ideas became unconnected, and it was some time before my mind could recover its usual tone. But from this reverie I was soon recalled by the voice of the sorceress, who perceiving the tumult that raged within me, addressed me in a manner mild, yet impressive. 'Theodore,' said she, 'listen to me with attention, while I explain to you the wonders you have beheld, and dispel the mist of ignorance by which you are surrounded. Skilled in the mysteries of nature, I well knew the calamities that had befallen you, and

and the moment of your deliverance from captivity ; various are the occurrences which have happened to those most dear to you during that period ; these I shall now unfold, that you may be enabled to direct the vengeance due to its proper point ; but remember, let victory and humanity be inseparable companions.’

“ It is needless for me to repeat the information that the old hag gave me ; suffice it that I became acquainted with every minutia that in any degree respected my family ; from her I learnt the marriage of my sister Adeline, and the subsequent death of her beloved husband.”

Theodore paused, but cast a look on the gloomy Albert, which spoke volumes to his soul, and he appeared even to shrink from the scrutiny. Albert, however, remained silent, and seemed to await the conclusion of the narrative with sullen apathy, while D’Armfeldt, though he admired the intrepid sincerity of the young Count, for whom he already felt an increasing inte-

rest, dreaded the final issue of a tale so replete with wonder, and which so materially implicated the conscious Albert. Theodore perceiving that neither of his auditors chose to hazard any remark proceeded.

“ My informer having thus made me acquainted with every thing necessary to be known, commanded me to hasten my return to my father’s ; ‘ the same fate,’ added she, ‘ that caused you to deviate from the direct course, shall henceforward be your guide ; follow the flight of this my faithful servant,’ pointing to the raven that sat beside her, ‘ and you shall experience no further difficulties.’

“ I arrived without encountering any further adventures at the Castle of De Mountfort, and made myself known to the warder, previous to my introduction to the family. Kindly had the old sorceress concealed from me the agony I was doomed to experience, on my entrance into the abode of my ancestors. Instead of rejoicings, the sounds of anguish echoed through the spacious

cious dwelling, and the trappings of funereal magnificence spoke volumes to my tortured heart. It was the corpse of my respected mother, who, unable to bear up against the dreadful accounts she had received of the demoniacal malice of the conqueror of Clagenfurth——” Albert started, while a fury, which he ill endeavoured to conceal, flashed in his eyes, and threatened to burst forth unrestrained; Theodore perceived his agitation, but proceeding with an undaunted spirit, added, “fell a sacrifice to her wounded feelings. A gleam of satisfaction, however, even amid all his misery, illumined the features of the old Count, on recognizing his long-lost son, whose safety, from the confession which the Baron D’Erlach left behind him, he had totally despaired of. But the misfortunes which had so rapidly succeeded each other had undermined the seat of health, and he likewise, in a few days, followed my beloved mother to the grave; not however before he had received my solemn oath as a knight to revenge the

disasters an inhumanity disgraceful to one invested with that honourable distinction had been the occasion of. Yes, Albert, Theodore de Mountfort challenges thee to the field : this arm shall avenge the wrongs of Adeline, and punish the inhuman murderer of her husband."

"Murderer!" echoed Albert, "it is false. Guards," continued he, in a fury, "seize that slanderous ruffian, and plunge him in the dungeon beneath the Castle gates; the stripling shall be taught that Albert is not to be insulted within his own palace with impunity."

The guards and domestics, who had withdrawn only to the anti-chamber, immediately entered, and were about to execute the commands of their chief by seizing upon Theodore, who, calm and unruffled, beheld the passing scene with a smile of contempt; when D'Armfeldt, who perceived that the young Count was unarmed, and that the honour of his chief would be materially injured should he put his hasty intentions
into

into execution, suddenly stepped forward, and before the officious menials could obey the orders which they had received, commanded them, with a tone of resolution, to desist. Albert put his hand to his sword; but D'Armfeldt, who perceived the movement, addressed him in a manner calm, yet dignified.—“ My Lord, forgive me for daring to prevent an action that will not only inflict indelible disgrace upon you, but which, in your cooler moments, I am satisfied you would repent; the quality of the Count de Mountfort ought at least to screen him from such an insult.”

“ The Count de Mountfort !” replied Albert, in a tone of derision; “ think you that I am to be made the passive tool of an impostor, or that I shall attend to the artful fabrication of an adventurer? Guards, obey the orders of your chief; and you, D'Armfeldt, take heed how you again venture to interpose against my authority.”

D'Armfeldt indignantly retreated from before the young Count, who still main-

tained a dignified silence, never offering to deprecate the rage of the chief, or to make the smallest resistance; and the guards were just ready to seize upon their victim, when the ominous messenger of the forest sorceress was heard croaking forth its discordant notes on the battlements of the Castle. An ashy paleness overspread the countenance of the haughty chief, who, as if seized with a sudden mania, rushed forward to the platform, leaving both D'Armfeldt and Theodore in the hall of audience, when the former, saying that he would be answerable for the appearance of the young Count, hastily dismissed the astonished menials, and accompanied by his protegee, followed the footsteps of the frenzied Albert.

No sooner had that chief reached the platform than his ears were again saluted by the same hateful sounds, when casting his eyes towards the eastern tower, he beheld the ominous denouncer of his fate perched upon its summit. Fury flashed in
his

his eyes, when snatching his arms from an attendant archer, the feathered shaft reached its destined mark, and the puny object of his wrath fell without motion at his feet. A sudden and indescribable horror seized the soul of Albert as he cast his eyes upon the dead raven, and ere he could recover from its effect, a tremendous burst of thunder increased his terror. At this instant D'Armfeldt and Theodore approached the platform, while Albert, gazing upon the vacant air, took no notice of the intrusion. The sky gradually became darker, while flashes of lightning, that threatened destruction even to the Castle itself, terrified, while they astonished the beholders. During this convulsion of nature, a flash more powerful than the rest struck Albert to the ground, and at the same time reduced the winged victim of his wrath to ashes, which a rapid whirlwind scattered in the air. Theodore was the first who perceived the situation of the chief, and supposing him dangerously hurt, if not anni-

hilated, his threatened vengeance gave place to the milder virtues of humanity, and he readily tendered that assistance his situation demanded ; while the sky, which but a short space before threatened an increase of the tempest, had become clear, as if satiated with the vengeance it had taken for the wanton deprivation of the life of an harmless bird. In the mean time, Theodore and D'Armfeldt, pondering on the late events, conveyed Albert, who still continued insensible, to his apartments, and sending for the physicians of the Castle, to whom they explained the cause of his illness, they left him to their care ; and D'Armfeldt, who felt himself more and more interested for Theodore, prevailed with him to accompany him to his own residence. The young Count readily acquiesced in his wishes ; for although he might, in the confusion attendant upon Albert's illness, have easily left Clagenfurth, yet his honour would not permit him to do it in a clandestine manner, or without the knowledge

ledge of the chief. The Chevalier admired the heroic and noble conduct of the youth, and could not avoid making the comparison between the boisterous valour of the one, and the calm courage of the other; and he determined within himself, that should Albert proceed to extremities, he would oppose him, even should he lose his friendship in the cause. But from this predicament he was soon relieved. The stimulants that the physicians applied produced the wished-for effect, and Albert was restored to life and to reason. The first use he made of it was to inquire what was become of the person who asserted himself to be the Count de Mountfort, and on receiving intelligence that he was at the Chevalier D'Armfeldt's, he immediately sent thither, commanding that the stranger should quit Clagenfurth, under pain of death, if found within the walls after twenty-four hours. It was with some difficulty that D'Armfeldt could persuade the young hero to pay obedience to the order, but his

his judicious and friendly representations at length produced the wished-for effect, and Theodore left the city, resolved that since the caution of Albert prevented his obtaining an individual satisfaction for the injuries his family had received from him, that he would convene the different branches of that family, and by resorting to arms, seek a public, and possibly a more effectual reparation.

During the time that Theodore remained at the Chevalier D'Armfeldt's, he had, by the assistance and connivance of that friend, obtained a private interview with his sister, the Princess of Clagenfurth; and so well conducted was the plan, that not even the numerous emissaries of Albert obtained the least intelligence of it, or even entertained a suspicion that such had been his intention. The meeting, as may naturally be supposed, was attended with circumstances the most affecting; the strength of mind; however, that both possessed, would not suffer them to lose the opportunity that

that fortune had offered in unavailing complaints of the past, but they prudently deliberated on the operations necessary to be pursued in future. Adeline acquainted Theodore with the prior marriage of the late Prince of Clagenfurth, and that there existed a daughter, the legal issue of that marriage. Although this intelligence was received with apparent indifference by Theodore, yet it made a deep impression upon his mind, and he secretly hoped that some fortunate change of circumstances might place her under the protection of his sister. To her he developed the conduct of Albert, and expatiated with just warmth on the friendship he had experienced from the Chevalier D'Armfeldt; this disclosure gave great satisfaction to Adeline, as it afforded her hopes that should there be a necessity, she also would experience the same friendly attention. But the plans of Theodore, if successful, of which, from the powerful connexions of his family, he made little doubt, were well
calculated

calculated to secure both the Princess and the young Rodolphus from the future oppression of Albert.

The unexpected appearance of the young Count de Mountfort at a time so extremely critical, was considered both by the Princess and abbess as the harbinger of good fortune; and the former, although she wished to procrastinate his departure from Clagenfurth, was so sensible of the dangers he would incur by remaining, without any proportionate advantage arising from such a delay, that she became reconciled to this hasty but necessary determination. It had been judged prudent, on a consultation between them, and in which the abbess was a party, that no steps should be taken for the discovery of the young Rodolphus, until such time as the issue of the intended appeal to arms was decided, when, should it ultimately prove favourable to their cause, there was little doubt but that the Chevalier Seckendorf would emerge from the obscurity to which the pressing necessity of

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of the case had condemned him, and to which his own patriotic spirit had induced him cheerfully to retire. It was not without great reluctance that the Princess consented to this arrangement, as she had flattered herself that by the joint endeavours of Sternheim and the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, she should have had the heartfelt satisfaction not only of learning the place of his retreat, but also of joining him at it, an intention, however, which she kept secret even from her most confidential friends. Maternal tenderness at last yielded to the cooler suggestions of prudence; and to the reasoning of the benevolent abbess was she principally indebted for this victory over the powerful suggestions of natural affection.

Various were the sensations that the arrival of Theodore caused in the minds of those who were principally interested in the circumstance. The Princess became more tranquil, D'Armfeldt more mysterious, and Albert more restless and uneasy.

No

No sooner had the young Count left the city, than the latter, awake to the dangers that surrounded him, and which, should Theodore have the power of putting his threats into execution, might in the end overturn all the brilliant prospects which his fancy had portrayed as within his grasp, cursed the irresolution of the moment that permitted a declared enemy to escape him. It is true, that although he pretended to treat him as an impostor, yet in his own mind he was convinced of the rectitude of his pretensions to the honours he laid claim to; for notwithstanding his long confinement, his features still retained a forcible resemblance to those of his more juvenile years; and the great similitude which they bore to those of the Princess was, if any corroboration was necessary, a material one in his favour. But while he reflected on these circumstances, a thought crossed his imagination, which still further unsettled his mind, already too much agitated for cool deliberation, by the extraordinary

dinary events that had so recently passed in review before him. The Princess Adeline, she for whom he had waded through seas of blood, was now in all probability lost to him for ever. Her objections, his vanity prompted him to imagine, might be easily removed; but how was he to conciliate a high-spirited youth, who had already dared to hurl defiance in his teeth, even within his own Castle. Would the Count de Mountfort, burning with revenge for the injuries of a sister, forget them so far as to consent that that very sister whose husband fell by his sword, should prove the bond of alliance between them? and yet, should he tamely resign his hopes? impossible. Such were the thoughts that crowded on the brain of Albert; he became restless and uneasy; his orders were indistinct, and frequently contradictory; nor could even those attendants about his person, most in favour, engage his attention. Even the Chevalier D'Armfeldt was again looked upon with the eye of suspicion,

cion, which the generous protection of the youthful Theodore had been the occasion of exciting.

While the mind of Albert was thus racked with doubt and apprehension, superstition, which, although weakened for a time by the spirited apostrophe of the Chevalier, had never been eradicated, recovered its pristine power; and the recollection of his destiny, foretold by the sorceress of the forest, and which had received additional support from the narrative of Theodore, corroborated by still more recent occurrences, almost overcame the courage with which Nature had so pre-eminently endowed him; and in addition to the other dangers by which he was threatened, he had to dread the anger and the revenge of the powerful foreteller of his fortunes. It was now that he once more deprecated the rage he had given way to, a rage at once pusillanimous and useless, and which could serve alone to render him despicable in the eyes of his menials, and of those

those

those brave soldiers who had beheld the effects of it. This feeling, even independent of the dread that he experienced from a power which he fancied superior to mortal agency, was of itself sufficient to "cow his better part of man," and almost to render him listless to the passing events, as he was well convinced that when once a chief has lost the confidence of his troops, although they may mechanically pay obedience to his orders, yet that the energy and spirit necessary to ensure victory will be wanting. Intelligence, however, of some warlike preparations in the neighbouring states, roused him from his inactivity, and rekindled in his soul the fire of ambition; and although he was ignorant whether he was the object against whom they were to be directed or not, the city of Clagenfurth was immediately put in a state of defence, the frontiers were doubly guarded, and the troops of the whole principality received orders to be in readiness at a moment's warning. The alacrity of the Chevalier
D'Armfeldt

D'Armfeldt upon this occasion, once more restored him to the full confidence of the chief, who entrusted him with the command of the army that was in readiness to be called together, while he himself took upon him the defence of the city; and thus prepared, he awaited the storm that appeared ready to burst over his head.

Albert had been so entirely engaged in the unexpected events which had taken place, that his attention to the motions of Sternheim, and his wished-for discovery of the infant Rodolphus through his means, had not only relaxed, but had totally subsided; and the emissaries employed upon the occasion were either otherwise engaged, or, perceiving that their services were become useless, they no longer busied themselves in watching his steps. The Chevalier D'Armfeldt, who, it may be remembered, remained at the habitation of Sternheim after the departure of Albert from thence, under the pretence of delivering a message to him from the Princess Adeline, but in reality

reality to procure what information he could respecting the recently-discovered progeny of the deceased Prince, and which, from the secret he was alone in the possession of, he made no doubt but that he should obtain, was disappointed in his wishes, as Sternheim, contrary to his usual custom, and to the surprise of his family, did not return until very late the same evening, and the sudden orders of Albert prevented D'Armfeldt from awaiting it. Sternheim was immediately made acquainted with the visitors that had called during his absence, and readily conjectured that the purposes of each were similar, namely, to gain from him, if possible, further intelligence of what had passed at the convent of St. Veil, as he could not avoid perceiving that Albert was far from being satisfied with the former explanation he had given; but although he wished to have seen D'Armfeldt, yet, as Albert was present, he thought his absence from home was more fortunate than otherwise, as it would have been impossible

possible to have had any private conversation with the former, without giving just reasons for suspicion. He was however much surprised at not having heard from either of them since ; for, living at the extremity of the city, and purposely confining himself to his quarters as much as possible, he was ignorant of those events which had taken place, and he judged that it would be the height of imprudence in him to solicit an audience of D'Armfeldt, as, notwithstanding his appearance of friendship towards the Princess, and those who were connected with her family, he had given no solid proofs of his attachment, sufficient in the opinion of Sternheim to place unlimited confidence in his assertions. Possessed of these sentiments, Sternheim determined not to throw himself voluntarily in his way, but to act as opportunity offered. Notwithstanding he most closely concealed his designs, even from the Princess, he had never lost sight of his original intention of making his escape from
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from Clagenfurth ; but he had been so narrowly watched, that hitherto he had found it impossible : to his great satisfaction, however, he perceived the remissness of the spies, a circumstance he determined, if possible, to take advantage of. One motive alone at times tempted him to forego his design, the service he might render the Princess Adeline, and the loss she would sustain by his absence. Accident, however, made him acquainted with the return of Theodore, a few days only previous to the departure of that gallant youth from Clagenfurth, and also with the conduct he intended to pursue. All anxiety on account of the Princess was instantly removed, and he resolved to gratify his ardent wishes, and seek out the abode of Seckendorf, to whom he judged the news of the late extraordinary events would be a subject of importance. Having made every necessary preparation for his departure with the utmost secrecy, he accordingly left the city of Clagenfurth the morning before the en-

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forced departure of Theodore from thence. To prevent any suspicion of his design, he took the road to the convent of St. Veil ; but when he had arrived at a sufficient distance, and was perfectly satisfied that none of the usual emissaries of Albert watched his motions, he hastily turned aside, and bent his course towards the retreat where he expected to find the Chevalier. The journey he had taken was hazardous, and would require some time to accomplish ; but Sternheim, although long past the prime of life, still possessed a strong and vigorous constitution ; and the hopes that he might be of service to the young Rodolphus, buoyed up his spirits and strengthened his nerves. Previous to his leaving Clagenfurth he had taken care to procure himself the dress of a pilgrim, it being not only the surest disguise, as it was almost universally worn by travellers, but likewise a certain passport into the splendid castles of the nobility, and the more retired, but scarcely less luxurious abodes of the monks. Report had
fixed

fixed the residence of Cyprian, a monk whom he remembered to have been in the confidence of the late Prince, and of the Chevalier Seckendorf, in the monastery of Pludenze, at the extremity of the Tyrol, near the Lake of Constance, from which, however, he was accustomed to absent himself occasionally, although seldom for longer than a month at a time. From this Sternheim conjectured that the retreat of the young Prince was at no great distance from the place of Cyprian's abode; his road lay through almost uninhabited wastes and extensive forests, and to chance alone must he depend on the discovery of some abstruse hut, the lonely habitation of a labouring hind, who daily earned his slender pittance by the sweat of his brow, and whose stock of provisions was most probably but ill calculated to afford refreshment to the weary traveller. It is true that by swerving from the direct road he might possibly obtain admission into a monastery, but these were so distant from each other,

that he had the prospect of spending many a weary night, the turf his pillow, and the canopy of heaven his sole covering. Yet these discouraging prospects in no degree lessened his zeal, and he boldly committed himself to the protection of an all-ruling Providence, and pursued his way with all the expedition which the roughness of the roads would permit. Fortune was so far favourable at the onset as to afford him a clear and unclouded sky ; and having had the precaution to take some provision with him, he sat cheerfully down by the side of a small rivulet to his frugal repast ; the moonbeams afforded a sufficient light, while they illumined the shadowy heights of the distant mountains, whose brows, covered with majestic forests, undulated to and fro, at the will of the refreshing breeze. To add to the pleasure of the scene, the plaintive notes of the nightingale were heard in various directions, whose melody, while it charmed the listening ear, seemed to lull the senses to repose.

Such

Such was the spot in which Sternheim passed the first night of his wanderings; and his mind, awakened to the simplicity of Nature, paused with astonishment on the reflection, that men could prefer the false glare and dangerous precipices of ambition to the steady light and smooth road of rural content; and even felt himself as if eased of an immense burthen, by having escaped from the bustle and turmoils of a city, where every motion was strictly watched, and where even his life itself depended on the capitious will of a chief, the destroyer of his former patron and protector. His mind thus comparatively at ease, Nature claimed her rights, and a gentle slumber drowned his senses in oblivion. No dreams of fearful import agitated his repose; all was calm and tranquil; and long ere the morning dawned, he awoke vigorous and refreshed. It was with some regret that he left a place so congenial to his feelings; but as he had some indistinct knowledge of the country, he conjectured

that by setting off thus early, he might arrive at a monastery, which, although at some small distance from the direct road, he preferred visiting, to the risk of again passing the night unsheltered, more particularly as the rising clouds indicated a material reverse to the beauties of the preceding evening. The road was intricate ; but having the good fortune to meet with two or three straggling peasants, one of whom belonged to the place he intended to call at, and to which he was returning with some provisions he had been ordered to procure, he arrived there without difficulty. From his companion he had learnt that a stranger, of noble appearance, had arrived at the monastery the day before, with an intention of pursuing his route in the morning ; but that having been seized with a severe illness, which even threatened his life, he had in consequence of it been obliged to postpone his design ; and that it was in order to procure some necessary articles for this stranger, which had occasioned him to
travel

travel that road. Sternheim listened with attention to the peasant, as it immediately struck him that it was Theodore, the young Count De Mountfort, who was thus dependant on the bounty and attention of strangers; and he felt greatly interested to be convinced of the fact. It was true, he had never seen Theodore, but still he made no doubt of recognizing him, by the resemblance he bore to the Princess of Clagenfurth. While revolving the means of introduction, he arrived at the gates of the monastery, and was readily admitted, and consigned to the care of one of the lay priests. It happened that this person was one of those meddling inquisitive minds that not only seek the knowledge of every person's concerns, but was himself of so talkative a disposition, as to render it a misery to him, not to be able to communicate his discoveries to others. He of course assailed Sternheim with a variety of questions, to which the answers he received were so vague and indeterminate, as most

effectually to puzzle him. However the monk did not resent this conduct by keeping silence himself, but most readily answered every question which Sternheim asked him. Of the sick stranger however he could give no information ; but during the conversation, Sternheim obtained so much knowledge, as to convince him that should the invalid prove to be Theodore, it was of the utmost consequence to him not to discover his name or rank in the situation he was in, as the abbot and most of the brotherhood were the staunch friends, and indeed the creatures of Albert. A casual inquiry that he made respecting Father Cyprian disclosed this secret, and consequently he became more anxious to obtain an interview with the stranger, as should it prove to be Theodore, he might put him upon his guard. He threw out several hints of his wishes to see the invalid, but they were totally disregarded ; and he was even upon the point of applying to the abbot himself for permission, under the pretence

pretence that he was acquainted with the sick person, when he received a message from the former that he wished to see him. Although rather surprised at this summons, he immediately prepared to obey it, and accordingly accompanied the messenger to the apartment where the abbot, attended by two of the superior monks and another person, not in the monastic habit, seemed in deep consultation. The customary civilities having been exchanged, the abbot informed him, that having accidentally heard that a pilgrim was in the monastery, and having frequently experienced the skill of many, who, under that habit, possessed a superior knowledge, he had requested his attendance, to know whether he had at any time made physic his study sufficiently to judge of the illness of a patient, as at present they had a young man under their care, who had been taken dangerously ill in the night, and who still continued so much so as to baffle the skill of the physician who usually attended the monastery,

whom Sternheim now understood was the person present. During the long residence of Sternheim in the family of the Prince of Clagenfurth, he had, from his constant personal attendance whenever any of them were indisposed, obtained some little knowledge of medicine, which he had occasionally improved by administering gratis to his fellow domestics, and the poor retainers in general. But although this was most probably a case that required much superior skill to any he could pretend to, yet it gave him such an opportunity of gratifying his wishes, and, if his suspicions were just, of rendering a most essential service to the brother of the Princess of Clagenfurth, that he resolved boldly to undertake the commission, and trust to fortune for the event; he therefore, without hesitation, acknowledged that he was not ignorant of the art of medicine, which he had practised with some success; but that having some material business in a distant country, he had chosen the habit of a pilgrim as the
most

most convenient to travel in, and so escape the prying observations of the curious; that although he could very ill afford the delay requisite on such an occasion, yet he could not refuse an application from a person of the abbot's consequence, which was so flattering to his vanity. Having thus, as he hoped, gained a firm footing in the opinion of the abbot, and silenced all further curiosity respecting himself by the trifling deception, if it might be so called, he had made use of, he requested that he might be introduced to his patient. The physician of the monastery accordingly led the way, and recounted to Sternheim the various methods he had tried to rouse the invalid from the torpid situation in which he appeared to be, all of which however had been applied in vain. Sternheim, who listened very attentively to his discourse, fancied that he had discovered the source of his illness, and that he should have no difficult matter to restore the invalid. From what he now heard, he had little doubt but

that his patient was the Count De Mountfort, and taking this for granted, he found himself in a difficult predicament, as the utmost caution was necessary, lest he should, on the first symptoms of convalescence, betray his quality, and thereby put himself in the power of his most inveterate enemy, for such Sternheim naturally supposed Albert was. No sooner had he entered the apartment than all his doubts were removed, and Sternheim beheld the youthful Theodore, who, though pale and insensible, still retained a likeness sufficient to identify him as one of the family of De Mountfort, particularly to a person so many years accustomed daily to behold the resemblance.

Here we shall leave this faithful domestic of the house of Clagenfurth examining with deep attention the lineaments of his youthful patient, and revolving in his mind by what means he could procure the absence of the physician without raising any suspicion of his motives, while we trace the steps of Theodore, from the time of his departure

parture from Clagenfurth to his arrival at the monastery.

It may be recollected, that twenty-four hours was the limited time given by the enraged Albert for his departure—a command that the entreaties of D'Armfeldt, and the hopes of future revenge, induced him to obey. Indignant at the treatment he had received, his mind was ill calculated to arrange those measures which were necessary to be taken previous to his making any attempt upon Albert. He was sensible that his affairs wanted a guiding head, while he himself undertook the executive part. Those whom he could most depend upon, and whose geniuses were calculated for such an undertaking, were at a great distance, and many would be the difficulties that would arise to prevent the concentration of a force sufficient for the purpose required, and which was to be drawn together from a quarter so distant from the scene of action. While reflecting upon these circumstances, the walls of Clagenfurth

furth lessened to his view, and he found himself in the open country, before he had determined which way he should first direct his course. Having been taken from Germany at so early a period, he was totally unacquainted with the situation of any particular place ; and he now began to be sensible of his error, in persisting in the refusal of an offer made to him by the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, of procuring for him an attendant, who would not only be a companion, but whose services he would find extremely beneficial, in procuring articles of refreshment and other necessaries. It was then however too late to repine, and the only consolation he had was a resolve to remedy his pertinacity the earliest opportunity. Fear was a total stranger to his bosom ; besides he was well armed, and the hardy life he had been accustomed to lead during his long residence with the banditti, had alike rendered him insensible to the effects of heat or cold ; to him the downy couch, or the rough hewn stone, were the same ; his
conscience,

conscience, unsullied by reproach, slept as undisturbed amidst the rolling of thunder, as in the more placid retirement of the sheltered grove : yet, although armed against these attacks, the late scenes he had been witness to, and the loss of those parents whose old age he had fondly hoped to have protected against the frowns of fortune, for whose sake alone he had supported with patience his long confinement in the subterraneous caverns of the banditti, had gradually and imperceptibly undermined the nobler germs of existence, and left them incapable of resisting the multiplied attacks that so rapidly followed each other. Thus high in bodily health, but oppressed with mental debility, Theodore pursued his journey, taking a western direction, and had the good fortune, by this accidental deviation from the direct road, of escaping those inconveniences, that Sternheim encountered the following day, as he arrived at the small village of Villach, where he received such attention as the poor inhabitants

tants could afford him ; they were however so extremely illiterate as not to be able to give him the smallest information, but recommended him to the fathers of that monastery where he was afterwards so fortunately joined by Sternheim. In pursuance of this recommendation, after amply remunerating his friendly entertainers, he left them the next morning, and having received such directions as he could not well mistake, set off for the object of his search, where he arrived, as before observed, late the same evening. Although he appeared in good health, yet those whose province it was to receive and provide for strangers who required lodging, remarked a gloom on his countenance, which did not at all seem natural, and either from curiosity, or really with the intention of beguiling that melancholy so unnatural to a youthful disposition, they asked him several questions relative to his situation, at the same time expressing their surprise that he should be travelling through so dreary a country, without

out a companion ; to all these they received answers that sufficiently indicated an unwillingness at conversation ; until at last, roused to exertion by one question more pointed than the rest, he suddenly rose, and demanded to be shewn to the apartment allotted for him. This was immediately complied with, and Theodore hastily dismissed the attendant, observing only that he should depart early in the morning. In about two hours, a monk who slept in an adjoining cell to that which Theodore occupied, having arisen to perform some act of devotion, fancied that he heard groans issue from the apartment, as if proceeding from a person in the agonies of death ; unwilling, however, to raise an useless disturbance, he listened with more attention, and was confirmed in his suspicions. Alarmed at such a circumstance, he instantly hastened to the apartment of the superior, to whom he was bound by the prescribed ordinances of the monastery to apply on such an occasion, and acquainted him

him with the cause of his intrusion. The abbot rose immediately, and calling up the physician, hurried to the cell, where they found the stranger apparently in strong convulsions. He frequently attempted to speak, but his speech was so inarticulate, that nothing could be discovered from it. The method, however, prescribed by the physician, in some measure gave relief to the suffering patient, as the convulsions became less powerful, yet, at the same time, the patient sunk into a torpid inactivity; his eyes seemed fixed upon some external object, from which they in vain endeavoured to withdraw his attention; neither did a syllable escape his lips; yet he refused not the sustenance it was thought proper to give him, though he received it mechanically, and seemingly unconscious of its purport. Such was the state in which Theodore, who had so lately revelled in the bloom of youth, and whose high courage had even daunted the daring soul of the conqueror of Clagenfurth, lay,

at the mercy of men who, had they been acquainted with his real quality, would most probably, if they had not left him to his fate, have betrayed him into the power of his most inveterate enemy.

Sternheim had not long made his observations, before Theodore, who had taken no notice of their entrance, gave a deep sigh, and opening his eyes, fixed them intently upon him, as if endeavouring to recollect his person; of this, however, Sternheim conceived there could be no danger, as so many years had elapsed since he had been seen by Theodore, and then only for a short time, when he once attended the late Prince of Clagenfurth to the Castle of De Mountfort, about two years prior to his sudden disappearance from thence. Neither would he have recollected the youth, had not his features been perpetually renewed in his mind, by the similitude of the Princess Adeline. The intent manner, however, with which he looked at him, gave him some alarm, and in order to take
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off his attention, he turned from him under pretence of addressing his companion. Still, however, Théodore gazed upon him, until it drew the attention of the physician, who remarked to Sternheim that their patient seemed to have recovered a degree of recollection, as from his looks he appeared to have some imperfect knowledge of him : to this Sternheim, who wished to put an end to such an idea, replied, that he considered such a circumstance as impossible; as he was certain that the patient had never seen him for many years, and if at all, it must have been at so early a period of his youth, that it was scarcely possible any traces of resemblance could remain in his memory. Another sigh drew their attention, and they perceived that he was more restless than usual ; this they considered as a favourable sign, and they determined to await the result. At this instant one of the fathers requested admittance ; he appeared hurried, till at last he stammered out that the physician was wanted, instantly to attend.

tend the abbot, who had suddenly fallen into a fit while officiating in the chapel. This intelligence raised an hope in Sternheim that he should now be left alone with Theodore; nor was he disappointed, as his companion, hastily saying that he must leave the stranger to his care, instantly departed with the monk. No sooner was the door closed, than Theodore, whose recollection had returned, asked Sternheim, in a low voice, if he had not many years ago seen him at the Castle of De Mountfort? Sternheim was surprised, but readily acknowledged it, at the same time assuring him that he was his friend, and requesting to know what could have thrown him into so dangerous a state? "I can no otherwise account for it," replied Theodore, "than that it was caused by the perpetual agitation that my mind has undergone for some days, as soon after my retiring to this cell, I became for a time delirious, and afterwards sunk into a state of apparent insensibility.

bility. Yet although I lay almost without motion, I could distinctly understand every thing that passed : I perceived they were very attentive to me, but at the same time some conversation, which I overheard between two of the monks, convinced me that I was surrounded by enemies ; yet I could not distinguish whether they knew me or not. This discovery, although I found myself almost totally recovered from the effects of my sudden illness, determined me to prolong the scene, and still to counterfeit a dereliction of reason. My suspicions were soon confirmed, as I found that the abbot was the particular friend of Albert ; but to my great relief, he appeared ignorant of the late transactions at Clagenfurth, consequently I supposed he knew not of my reappearance ; and I was meditating how to act when you made your appearance. I was instantly struck with your features, but caution whispered me not to be too precipitate ; I therefore acted as
you

you have seen ; and as I feel myself quite strong enough to pursue my intended journey, am impatient to commence it."

Sternheim, however, here interrupted Theodore by observing, that such a conduct might really induce a suspicion, adding, " Trust to me, and before to-morrow we will depart, for I am no less anxious than yourself to quit this place, and when once in security, have not only much to inform you of, but also a proposal to make. At present appear to have recovered your reason, and when next I visit you, be calm, but take no notice of any prior knowledge of me."

Sternheim left Theodore to himself, but although the latter felt some surprise, he determined to act as directed. Sternheim, however, returned in a much less time than he could have expected him ; his countenance betokened agitation and impatience, while in a hurried manner he inquired of Theodore if he found himself strong enough to rise ? Theodore answered in
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the affirmative, and instantly dressed himself, when Sternheim, in a low voice, whispered, "Follow me, and for your life let not a word escape you." The youth, snatching up his arms, which lay near the couch, mechanically obeyed the order, although extremely astonished; yet he doubted not but that his conductor had powerful reasons for acting in so precipitate a manner. They passed through the long avenues of the monastery without molestation; all was silent, until at last they heard the solemn chaunt which proceeded from the chapel. This circumstance occasioned them to change their direction, as Sternheim dreaded the meeting with some of the monks, either going to or from the chapel. Turning therefore to the right, they at last arrived at a private gate, which as it was fastened only on the inside, proved no impediment to their design, and a few minutes beheld them in the open air. The day had just began to break, and although Theodore was impatient to be made acquainted with

with the reasons for this hasty procedure, yet as Sternheim seemed averse to conversation, and wished to push forward, he restrained his eagerness until a more suitable opportunity. But although Theodore was thus far recovered, yet the haste with which they travelled began to have a sensible effect upon him, and he candidly confessed to Sternheim that he felt it impossible to go much further: Sternheim pointed to a forest at no great distance, and asked him whether he could not sustain himself until they reached it, as they should then be in little danger of discovery? This consideration roused him to exertion, as he was satisfied that his companion would not have been thus urgent, had he not a sufficient cause; and with the utmost difficulty they effected their wishes.

No sooner had they gained the friendly shelter, than Sternheim, who had been aware of what might happen to Theodore, produced a cordial, which he procured under the pretence of its being necessary for his patient, and which, from the great value

put upon it by the abbot of the monastery, and the many wonderful cases he had heard described as cured by it, he had reason to believe was a most powerful restorative. A few drops only were reckoned sufficient; those he administered to the almost exhausted Theodore, and he soon found that the virtues of the medicine had not been exaggerated, as in less than an hour Theodore not only felt himself recovered from his fatigue, but scarcely retained any lassitude from his late severe attack. Perceiving the effect it produced, Sternheim carefully preserved the remainder, sensible that both himself and his companion might have further occasion for it. As the young Count found himself so much refreshed, he wished to enter into the particulars of the late events, but Sternheim again requested that he would delay his curiosity until the next day, when they would most probably be perfectly secure, and proposed immediately pursuing their journey, although as yet they had come to no decision

sion upon their future plans; the only object being at present security from the dangers which threatened them. A peasant's hut afforded them shelter and refreshment, the ensuing evening; and the next morning beheld them pass the boundaries of Carinthia, and enter the Tyrol. Here they judged themselves safe, either from the emissaries of Albert or the inquiries of the monks, and they determined to take up their abode for a few days in a romantic village not far from the borders, in order to obtain some rest, and arrange their plans for their future proceedings. A mutual confidence soon took place, and a reciprocal relation of events cemented their friendship; for Theodore would not permit Sternheim to consider himself as a menial, but from that instant consulted him on every occasion, as one whose prudence he could rely upon, and whose knowledge of mankind, and his great attachment to the Princess Adeline, could not fail of being beneficial to him on any emergency.

The village in which they had taken up their residence was situated on the banks of the river Drave, at some distance from any main road, and frequented chiefly by a few fishermen, who seemed so intent upon their own occupation as not to trouble themselves in the concerns of their neighbours; nor did even the arrival of two strangers interest them, further than as they contributed to a larger sale of the produce of their labour. Indeed the whole village was so well calculated for seclusion, that both Theodore and Sternheim thought themselves extremely fortunate at having so accidentally wandered to it; and they determined if, after a proper trial, no material objection arose, to make this their place of private rendezvous on all future occasions, for which purpose it was requisite to gain a thorough knowledge of the environs, and the most secure and secret passes into the province of Carinthia. This would necessarily take up some time; a circumstance they did not regret, as they should

should be enabled to bring their plans to greater maturity, and with a probability of success superior to what an hasty determination could ensure.

Seated one evening on the banks of the Drave, contemplating the fishermen, who, with unwearied diligence, pursued their daily occupation, Theodore requested Sternheim to inform him of the reason that induced him to hurry from the monastery in so secret and mysterious a manner, to which the latter readily agreed.

“ You may remember,” said he, “ that I quitted you after giving such directions as suited the exigency of the moment, intending to repair to the apartment of the abbot, for the double purpose of making inquiries respecting his health, and to announce your return to reason, and that as your complaint proceeded merely from fatigue, your convalescence would take place as rapid as did your illness. As I was passing through one of the passages leading to the apartments of the superior, I met the physician,

sician, who had been attending him, and of course inquired the state of his health ; I found that he was so much recovered as to be able to give audience to a person whom he was just going to conduct to him. I expressed myself much gratified by the account, and in return communicated your restoration to reason, and that I made no doubt but that a few hours would complete your cure. He appeared pleased to hear it, and we parted. Curiosity, however, fortunate as it proved, induced me to postpone my intentions of going to the abbot, and instead of paying that visit, to endeavour to make a discovery of the person who was so earnest for an interview ; indeed I confess my suspicions pointed out to me that it was not impossible but that I might be the object of it. Concealing myself, therefore, where I could both see and hear without being discovered, I awaited the arrival of the stranger ; and the first view discovered to me a face well known as one of the principal friends of Albert. Willing to
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hear the extent of his commission, I kept my place, and found that you, my Lord, was the principal object; that Albert, repenting he had suffered you to depart from Clagenfurth, had dispersed his emissaries round the country, with orders the most sanguinary. The description he gave of your person was so exact as not to be mistaken; in short, the abbot, who I perceived was the creature of Albert, consented to every thing, confessed that you was in the monastery at present deprived of reason, and that it would be no difficult matter to have it believed, that in one of the paroxysms, you had laid violent hands upon yourself. Fearful of the consequences, and that they might proceed to the immediate execution of their diabolical plan, I instantly retreated; the rest you already know, and it was this that made me so very urgent to get beyond the bounds of Albert's power, as, should his emissaries dare to penetrate further, I was sensible that the inhabitants would protect us; and I own, that

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that fearful of your high spirit, I delayed acquainting you with the circumstance, lest you might have been induced, even at the hazard of your life, to have sought revenge."

"Sternheim," cried Theodore, pressing his hand, "little did I imagine I was so much indebted to you, but believe me, the life you have saved shall henceforward be under your guidance; you shall modulate those fiercer passions which riot in my heart, and direct, with the caution of experience, that revenge which burns to be let loose on the assassin."

After this interesting communication, the two friends, more united than ever, proceeded in the task they had allotted to themselves. The dawn of day beheld them piercing the most intricate recesses, while the evenings were employed in such conversations with the innocent inhabitants as they could, without danger of discovering their views, indulge themselves in, and from which they obtained much local, and to them

them useful knowledge. Having extended their researches one day so far as to render it impossible for them to return to the village in the evening, to their great surprise they found themselves not far distant from the Julian Alps, a discovery of the utmost importance to Theodore, who knew that the banditti, with whom he had so many years been detained, frequently visited that neighbourhood. He immediately apprized his companion of the circumstance, observing that a more than usual caution was necessary, as should he be discovered by them, it was more than probable that his life would become a sacrifice to their resentment for his escape. Sternheim was sensible of the danger, and advised their attempting to return to the village as soon as possible; when they might consider at leisure the measures it might be necessary for them to adopt. The evening, however, was far advanced; and unfavourable for their attempt; dark clouds obscured the light of the moon, which at its first rising had

promised assistance ; and although no rain added to the uncomfortableness of their situation, they found themselves obliged, after repeated trials, to desist from their intention, and await with patience the return of day. One reflection, however, consoled them—that the same darkness which prevented their proceeding would most probably secure them from observation. They accordingly took advantage of a large oak, which, spreading its branches to a great distance, afforded a comfortable shelter ; and after partaking of some refreshment, which, on such excursions, they always made a point of taking with them, well knowing the difficulty of procuring any necessaries in that neighbourhood, fatigued with the exertions they had made, they sunk into a placid and undisturbed repose. It was about the hour of midnight when Theodore was roused from this state of oblivion by the reflection of a light, which, flashing across his eyes, banished the trammels of sleep. Snatching up his sword,

sword, which lay close by him, he instantly prepared for his defence, when perceiving an old man, whose hoary locks bespoke age, bending over him with anxiety in his countenance, every suspicion of injury was instantly banished from his mind. The action of Theodore awakened his companion ; he appeared much surprised at the figure before him, who, before they could recover from their astonishment, addressed them in a tone which immediately conciliated their esteem, and at once dissipated every rising suspicion.

“ My sons,” said the old man, “ I perceive your surprise, not unmixed with fear ; but dispel every idea of terror, and consider me as a friend, who would, if possible, not only be serviceable to you, but to all mankind. But this is no proper place either to make such offers, or to explain myself more fully. The dews begin to fall, and the whistling of the wind through the adjacent forests indicate an approaching tempest. Suffer me therefore to offer you

an asylum, where free either from the dangers of the atmosphere, or others, which may accidentally occur, you may finish that repose my appearance has disturbed, in peaceful security. The distance is not far, and perhaps if you are wandering through these wilds for any particular purpose, it may be in my power, old as I am, to assist you in your inquiries; but come, let us proceed."—Neither Theodore or Sternheim made the least hesitation in complying with his request. The readiness with which they accepted of his invitation, seemed to give the old man great satisfaction, and he thanked them for the confidence they had placed in him, "a confidence," added he, with energy, "that shall be most amply repaid." Theodore was surprised at the warmth of expression which their conductor had made use of, while Sternheim, although free from any apprehension, could not avoid regarding him with the scrutinizing eye of wary experience. Thus employed in conjecture, and in almost total silence, they arrived

rived at the habitation of the hermit, for such we shall at present call him. The approach to it was so extremely intricate, that had they not kept quite close to their conductor, it would have been almost impossible for them to have found the entrance. If, however, they had been surprised at the sight of the hermit himself; they were much more so at the first view of his abode. In appearance it was a large cavern, excavated from the side of the mountain, close to which a small but refreshing spring amply supplied its inhabitants, and gently flowing through the intricacies of the grove in which it was situated, formed itself, at some little distance, into a natural bath; while around shrubs and flowers of the most exquisite scent diffused their odoriferous fragrance, and added not only to the beauty but the luxury of the scene. But although the eye might wander here in pleasing variety, still it was, if possible, more gratified by the interior of the cavern, whose arched roof, glittering with natural spars, seemed

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to dim the lustre of the artificial light produced by the lamps around it. On their entrance into this enchanting abode, the hermit, who, notwithstanding his age, appeared strong and active, placed before them such fruits as were in season ; neither was the vintage of the country wanting ; and it was with a smile that their host beheld the surprise of his guests, who could scarcely restrain their amazement at what they beheld. As soon as Nature had been satisfied, the hermit proposed to them to retire, adding, " To-morrow shall be dedicated to your service ; at present we all want rest." Although both Sternheim and Theodore were extremely anxious for an explanation of these wonders, yet they could not avoid paying obedience to the suggestion of the hermit, and retired to a couch composed of the finest rushes, which were strewed in an interior apartment of the cavern. Sleep soon made them insensible both of the pleasure they had experienced, and the anxiety with which they
had

had coveted an explanation ; nor did they awake until the sun darting its beams through the thick foliage, discovered to them the length of their repose. On approaching the exterior, where they had partaken of refreshment the evening before, they found the morning repast in readiness, consisting of fruit, milk, and other simple and rural food. The hermit, however, was absent, and they accordingly strolled to the entrance of the cavern, in order to contemplate those beauties before described, of which they could have a very faint idea, from the small reflection that the solitary lamp of the hermit had afforded the foregoing evening. Fearful of losing themselves in the labyrinthian windings of the environs to the cavern, they contented themselves with viewing those beauties contained within the narrow horizon by which they were bounded. While thus employed, they perceived the hermit approaching them from one of the avenues which led into the adjacent country ; after
apologizing

apologizing for his absence, the reason of which he would afterwards inform them of, they returned into the cavern, and partook of their humble yet delicate fare. This completed, the hermit, who had, though not unperceived, looked at Theodore with peculiar attention, asked them to accompany him through his little domains, when he would acquaint them with his history, and the occasion of his present mode of life, "a mode," added he, with a sigh, "which misfortune first prescribed, but which has now become so habitual as to be my greatest consolation. To you, Theodore De Mountfort——" Theodore started at hearing himself named, and without giving the hermit time to finish the sentence, asked him with impatience, "How he came to know him?" The hermit smiled, but it was a smile of complacency, which set the heart of Theodore, and even of Sternheim, at ease, who had instantly conceived suspicions that they were betrayed, and more particularly as Theodore recollected that he had
sometimes

sometimes heard the banditti mention the hermit of the Alps. To Theodore's question, however, the old man readily answered, "I guess your thoughts, but believe me they are injurious to me, and I call Heaven to witness that your safety and future honour is the chief employment of my thoughts. I have known you almost ever since your birth, and have even watched over your welfare among those mountains; but I will not anticipate; the relation I purpose giving you will amply convince both yourself and companion, whom I have also some faint recollection of, that you possess not a truer friend than the hermit of the Alps."

This declaration evidently encreased the astonishment of both; but in order to ensure a mutual confidence, Sternheim made himself known to the hermit, who appeared much gratified by the intelligence. The old man led them to a seat in the most retired part of the wilderness, the beauty of which was even superior to what they had before

before seen, where, seating themselves beneath the shady trees, he began his promised history.

“ Although now cloathed in the habiliments of peace, once, like yourselves, my soul panted for fame and honour. To me the clashing of arms, and the neighing of the pampered steed, afforded the greatest delight; neither did I conceive any enterprise too dangerous to be attempted, or too difficult to be overcome. This warlike spirit I inherited from my parents, who fostered my rising ambition, and delighted to encourage that daring ardour which so evidently displayed itself from the earliest period of my infancy, and proved me a true and genuine scion from the parent stock; since nobility, pure and uncontaminated, flows in these veins, which can boast the noblest blood of Germany and Switzerland. In me, Theodore, behold a man long thought no more, Henry Count Von Werdenberg.”

Theodore and Sternheim uttered a cry of
astonishment

astonishment at hearing the name of a person of whom no certain intelligence had been received for many years, and who was in general supposed to have been no longer in existence; and their countenances almost testified their incredibility. The hermit perceived their doubts, and continued:

“I am not surprised at the hesitation you make in crediting the assertion, as so many years have elapsed since any public tidings have been heard concerning me; and although the history of my life will explain the mystery of my reported death, and sufficiently identify my person, yet to engage more the confidence of my young relation, and also that of his faithful companion, behold a mark, which you, Sternheim, are sufficiently acquainted with the occasion of my receiving.”

The hermit laid bare his chest, and displaying to his wondering auditors a deep scar in the centre of it, in the shape of a cross, which Sternheim no sooner beheld than

than he instantly recognized the circumstances that occasioned it, and hastened to pay such respect as was due to the man so dear to his country ; while the heart of Theodore glowed with an enthusiastic ardour at the sight of a wound received in so glorious a cause as that he then beheld ; and he became more impatient than ever to hear the eventful history of his life, and the reasons that could induce so favoured an hero to bury himself in the obscurity of the mountains.

The old Count checked the zeal of Sternheim, requesting him for the present at least to consider him as the hermit of the Alps, and to lose sight, in that single title, of those high-sounding names which it had once been his pride to acknowledge, but which he had for so many years relinquished ; and perceiving by the looks of Theodore his impatience to be made acquainted with these mysterious occurrences, he proceeded, first observing that he should not anticipate his narrative by explaining

plaining the circumstance of the wound, and the occasion of it, as it would naturally make part of his history, which, as Theodore was not perfectly acquainted with the events of earlier times, he should commence from the period of his first taking up the profession of arms.

“I scarce need,” continued the hermit, particularly addressing himself to Theodore, “mention the near connexion in which we stand to each other by blood, as you are sufficiently acquainted with the genealogy of the De Mountforts, to know that your father and myself were sister’s children. I was, however, nearly ten years older than the Count De Mountfort, and made my first essay in arms soon after I had attained my sixteenth year, under the immediate eye of my father, who was at that time engaged in a dispute with the Prince Bishop of Bamberg, relative to the seizure of two of his vassals, under the pretence of their having committed some depredations on the frontiers of the principality. The
Bishop

Bishop was proud in the extreme, and esteemed himself of so much consequence in the empire, as to make him imagine that he could insult the less powerful nobility, without apprehension of any reprisal, or dread of their vengeance. Indeed, whether it was owing to a want of unanimity among themselves, or a narrow jealousy of each other, that prevented a coalition between the weaker estates, in order to oppose the imperious oppression of the Prince Bishop, certain it is that they never attempted any resistance to the various acts of encroachment, which he was perpetually making upon their inherent rights, but tamely submitted to whatever terms he chose to impose. The insult, however, he had offered to my father, in the persons of his vassals, aroused his indignation; but, sensible that he was too weak to cope with him singly, he seemed like the rest of his neighbours to submit tamely, until he had privately sounded the sentiments of the different branches of the family. All seemed
actuated

actuated as if by one spirit ; nor was any one more forward than your grandfather. But our principal reliance was from our friends in Switzerland, who felt themselves bound, as members of a solemn league which had many years before been concluded between our ancestors, to afford every assistance in their power to each other, whenever they were attacked or insulted. These preparations, however, could not be made so secretly, but that the Prince Bishop obtained intelligence of them, and judging that the storm would soon burst over his head, he made the most active preparations for repelling force by force.

“ Notwithstanding my youth and inexperience, my father had entrusted me with the command of a choice squadron of cavalry, but at the same time joined with me an officer of well-known experience and consummate bravery. Several petty skirmishes took place, in which each party obtained alternate advantages, which were, however, of no further service than to harass both
without

without bringing the contest to a final issue. As the most considerable part of our force was comprised in those allies who came from a distance, and who, as soon as the campaign was over, would return into their own territories, it became a matter of the utmost importance to us to bring on a decisive engagement, which the enemy consequently wished to avoid, for the same reasons that excited us to obtain it.

“ Several weeks were passed in this desultory warfare, when a sudden thought striking my conception, which might possibly bring on a battle, I mentioned it to the old officer who had been joined with me in the command. He seemed evidently surprised that a youth unaccustomed to the theory or practice of war should have hit upon a method which, on minutely examining the plan, he judged would not only be productive of the effect, but also of a certain victory; and with a sincere pleasure, unalloyed by envy, he immediately communicated my ideas to my father, together

gether with his own observations on them. I was accordingly sent for, and was received by that brave man, not only with the affection of a parent, but with the warmth and enthusiasm of a hero. After canvassing over the scheme, during which the judicious remarks made by the chief considerably simplified the manœuvres necessary, 'Go,' said he to me, 'and as the idea is your own, let the honour of its success be also yours.' It is unnecessary for me to enter into the minutia of the engagement that followed; suffice it to say, that fortune favoured my attempt, and I returned victorious, having taken the Prince Bishop himself prisoner, who, not conceiving it possible for us to make the attack in the quarter we did, thought himself in no danger. This event was productive of a peace, but at the same time removed me from my father's protection, and placed me under the more immediate care of the Emperor. That monarch had been made acquainted with the particulars

of the late engagement, and ever ready to encourage those who in any way distinguished themselves by their personal courage, he immediately requested my father to resign me to him, an honour so flattering as not to be refused.

“ A new scene was now opened to my ambition ; caressed and distinguished by one of the most powerful monarchs of the age, nothing appeared out of my reach, and the Emperor soon discovered the regard he had for me, by assigning me a post near his person. Some years passed in this manner, during which period my interest seemed rather to increase than diminish, and I even flattered myself that my exaltation was beheld without envy ; at least, if the minds of any were prejudiced against me, their sentiments were so well concealed as entirely to escape detection. Nor was it in public alone that I found myself caressed by my sovereign ; our private hours were devoted to a friendship I have the vanity to think was equally dear to both. At
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these times the cold frigid ceremony of state was exchanged for the more genial warmth of confidential intercourse : but the war which broke out with France roused us from our dreams of tranquillity ; and although I was offered the most honourable commands, I made no hesitation in sacrificing the hopes of fame to the wish of remaining about the person of the Emperor, more particularly as I well knew it was his intention to take the field in person. This arrangement accordingly took place in the following spring, and his arrival at the grand army inspired the troops with so enthusiastic an ardour as to promise the most splendid victory. But we were now doomed to experience the fickleness of fortune, which had hitherto smiled on our actions, and enabled us to repulse the enemy at all points.

“ As soon as the reinforcements which the Emperor had brought with him had recovered from the fatigues of their march, it was determined to give battle to the enemy.

Aware of our intention, they prepared to receive us with a courage equal to our own, and for a long time victory was doubtful, sometimes inclining to one party, and again as suddenly changing to the other. I had taken my station close to the Emperor, who, perceiving his right wing borne down by the impetuosity of their opponents attack, and on the point of giving way, hastened with the guards to support it. An immense slaughter now took place; the Emperor, careless of danger, rushed into the thickest of the engagement, and, overpowered by numbers, was thrown from his horse. Already had one of the enemy lifted up his battle-axe to put a period to his existence, when, rushing forward, I received the blow intended for my sovereign on my own breast; I instantly fell, but our troops perceiving the imminent danger that surrounded us, rallied, and bore both the Emperor and myself off the field, although not without the greatest difficulty. My senses had totally forsaken me, neither
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did I recover them for several days, when I found that I had been conveyed to Coblentz, which was at some distance from the place where the engagement took place. My first inquiry was concerning the Emperor, and I was happy to find that he had escaped with a wound of a very trifling nature. As soon as he was informed that I was in a state of convalescence, he came with all the familiarity of a friend to visit me; the thanks I received, both from himself and from the empire at large, for having preserved the life of their sovereign at so critical a moment, at the greatest hazard of my own, were such as to gratify the most unbounded vanity. Even public rejoicings were made on my recovery, and every attention that a grateful nation could bestow, was most freely given. The disasters we had met with rendered peace desirable; and that object being accomplished, and my health nearly established, I purposed putting in practice a scheme I had long meditated, of making the tour of Italy.

I had little difficulty in obtaining the permission of the Emperor; we parted, and as if seized with a presentiment of the future, the separation was attended with the most painful emotions to both. I embarked on board a Genoese, preferring going by sea rather than by land, with a sufficient number of attendants, purposing to reach the city of Genoa, where I had some connexions who were impatient to see me. Fate, however, ordained we were not to meet, as a few days after we had lost sight of the land, a strange sail made its appearance, which, on its nearer approach, was easily distinguished to be one of those piratical corsairs that enrich themselves at the expence of every other nation by plunder. Confident that victory or slavery were our only alternatives, and being tolerably well manned, we prepared for the enemy, who bore down upon us, and after firing a broadside, immediately attempted to board us. In this attack, however, he was beat off, but returned to it again with redoubled vigour.

vigour. The conflict then became more furious, and we were again so far successful, as not only to drive those out of our vessel who remained alive, but also to board our opponent. The battle now seemed but just began, and it continued for a length of time with the utmost fury ; in the midst of it I fell, and, as I have since been informed, to all appearance dead. It was this circumstance that spread the report of my death, which was further confirmed by those who escaped the slaughter, and with some difficulty reached Genoa. The blow, however, by which I fell only stunned me ; but when I recovered I found myself a prisoner on board the Turkish galley ; and although I was attended with an humanity not usual to those desperadoes, a horror of my future situation occasioned so violent a fever, that for a length of time my life was despaired of ; neither had I any wish to preserve it. Youth and a good constitution, however, prevailed ; and when we arrived at Tunis, our destined

port, I was nearly in a state of convalescence. It was in vain that I disclosed to the captain of the ship my rank, and offered such a ransom as I doubted not would tempt the most covetous. He told me that he had observed my bravery, and that I should be a most acceptable present to his brother, who was the principal aga of the janizaries at Constantinople. To that city therefore was I sent, as soon as I was able to travel without danger, while my poor companions were dispersed in various directions. I was received by Selim, the aga, in a manner that convinced me his brother had been very particular in his representation of me. At my first audience he informed me that if I was faithful, I should not find my situation so terrible as perhaps I had formed it to myself in idea, as I should not be put to any degrading employment. These assurances rather raised my spirits; and being perfectly sensible that any attempt to regain my liberty immediately was impossible, I determined to prove my obedience

obedience in the best way possible ; and told him in answer, that as I had known how to command, so also I knew how to obey. He appeared much pleased, and immediately consigned me to the care of one of his officers, who he told me would give me instructions as to what was expected from me. I was not entirely unacquainted with the Turkish language, so that I found little difficulty either in comprehending what was ordered, or in making known my wants. A vest more magnificent than the generality of the slaves was given to me, and I found that my business was to instruct his eldest son Ibrahim, then sixteen, in the use of arms, and the complete management of a horse. I confess that this employment was so perfectly congenial to my disposition, that I entered upon it with alacrity, and had the happiness to find my pupil so docile, as to promise his attaining the highest perfection. Selim beheld the progress of his son with astonishment, and I soon found the effects of his satisfaction.

as my slavery existed but in name. Equally beloved both by the father and the son, I passed my time in something like happiness; indeed, had it not been for the recollection of the sorrow I well knew the Emperor would experience, on hearing of the fatal event that had happened to me, I might perhaps have insensibly lost every wish of returning to my native country; on this subject only Selim was inflexible; kind and generous in every other respect, he would have loaded me with riches, but never would consent either to my emancipation, or that I should by any means acquaint my former friends of my existence.

“The temptations which were held out to me to become a Musselman, might have staggered a man much more ambitious than myself; indeed that alone was wanting to have raised me to the highest dignities of the nation, so much had my reputation increased, through the encomiums which the father and son took every opportunity of passing upon me. Thus honoured and
beloved,

beloved, I at length felt myself insensibly attached to them, and even formed the resolution never to desert them clandestinely, or to obtain my liberty without consulting my benefactors, for such I could not avoid considering them ; but fortune destined me to experience another change, which, although it increased my happiness for some time, was but the forerunner of irremediable misfortunes."

The hermit paused, and his attentive auditors perceived a tear trickling down his aged cheek, while a convulsive sigh seemed almost ready to burst the bonds of existence. Theodore, who had become more and more interested in the narrative, felt concerned that the relation of it should have recalled scenes to the old Count's memory, which time had nearly buried in oblivion, and observing that it was with difficulty he could restrain his agitation, considerably proposed, as the day was far advanced, that he should postpone the remainder until he found himself more composed, adding, that

although it was his desire to return to the village, yet he would readily delay his intention, if that remaining at the hermitage would not prove an inconvenience. The old Count apologized for the interruption, observing, that time had not so entirely blunted the keenness of his feelings, as to render him insensible to the losses he had sustained, the recollection of which never failed to affect him ; but although the impression was over, and he found himself sufficiently composed to pursue the narrative, yet he readily acquiesced in the proposed delay. "Time," added he, "has flowed so imperceptibly, that the sun has already passed the meridian, and summons us to the duties of the day, and to a repast which we shall find prepared for us in the cavern ; to-morrow we will resume our discourse ; nor need you fear intruding upon my comforts, which, simple as they are, are still sufficient for a greater number of guests than at present make part of my society."

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The old Count rising, led the way to the cavern, where, if his guests were surprised at the entertainment of the evening before, they were quite astonished at beholding the repast, which might almost be deemed sumptuous, as it consisted of various kinds of fruits in the highest perfection, cream, and bread of a superior whiteness and quality, added to which were different species of dried fish and caviare, together with the various wines and liqueurs produced in that country. What increased their wonder was, that hitherto they had seen no attendant, except a female, whose years bespoke her perfectly incapable of executing such offices as the plenitude before them rendered indispensably requisite. The old Count was aware of their thoughts, and smiling, observed, that solitary as he appeared, his table was amply supplied with those innocent delicacies which nature afforded; "neither," continued he, "are they the gift of supernatural agents, or a display of ostentation, but are furnished by
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the genuine affection and benevolence of the neighbouring peasantry, who no sooner hear that my hermitage is honoured with visitors, than they severally hasten with whatever assistance they can afford, while two faithful slaves, the sad companions and partakers of my former misfortunes, whose intrinsic worth is far above my praise, arrange the wholesome refreshment. These, however, I never suffer to wait upon me, but when real necessity obliges me, as I owe too much to their past services to treat them as menials, though I cannot prevent their affection from acting as such. The sequel of my history will satisfactorily explain the nature of my obligations to them."

The attention both of Sternheim and Theodore was strongly excited by the relation of the Count, and no sooner was the frugal repast concluded, than the latter betrayed an impatience to hear the sequel of so eventful a tale, which had for so many years deprived Germany of its greatest hero. The Count smiled at his eagerness, and

and making some good-humoured observations on his curiosity, again led the way to the sequestered bower, where seating themselves on its moss-covered seats, he thus resumed his narrative.

“The conduct both of Selim and Ibrahim towards me was so extremely friendly, that I had become, as I before observed, in a great degree reconciled to my situation; the one treated me as a son, the other as a beloved brother. The time, however, now arrived when my pupil was to reduce to practice that theory of which I had laboured to make him the complete master. Neither had my instructions been sown in a barren soil; and it was with the greatest satisfaction I perceived the ardent zeal with which he embraced the glorious opportunity of exercising his abilities.

“The sovereign of Persia had frequently made encroachments on the territories of the Turks, which, either from the weakness, incapacity, or treachery of the governors of those provinces where such depredations had

had been committed, were for a long time suffered to exist with impunity. Grown more daring by this supineness, they at length carried matters so far, as to seize on a considerable treasure, which, under a strong escort, was intended to have been sent to Constantinople, it being the annual tribute due from some of the frontier provinces. So daring an insult, in the execution of which much blood was shed, and the principal basha himself lost his life, could not pass unnoticed, as, besides the outrage, the disappointment was most severely felt at Constantinople, where the arrival of the money was anxiously expected by the Sultan, in order to give the usual presents to those troops he particularly depended upon. War became the general cry, and an immense army was immediately formed, of which Selim, who had peculiarly distinguished himself as a brave and vigilant officer, had the command. It was now that Ibrahim was to make his first essay in arms, and, as you may naturally suppose, I was destined

destined to accompany him. Prior, however, to our leaving Constantinople, in order to join the main army, which had advanced by forced marches to the frontiers of Persia, Selim, whose multiplied engagements were never the occasion of obliterating from his mind the affection he bore his son, took the opportunity of thus addressing him in my presence:—‘Ibrahim, my regard for you, and an eager desire to render you supereminent in those duties which add splendor to the most illustrious name, has induced me in some degree to deviate from the strict letter of the Mohammedan law, by permitting Abdallah (for such was the name given to me when a slave) to enjoy many privileges hitherto denied to those of his religion; it is, however, a duty incumbent upon me to declare that he has amply repaid every concession that has been made in his favour, by the great attention he has paid to your education, more particularly in that branch of it which the insults offered to your country
now

now call upon you to exercise. The command which I shall entrust to you is of that nature which, if executed with skill and judgment, will not only immortalize your own name, but amply justify me in the partiality I feel for Abdallah. The rules of service will not permit me to associate him with you; but let me entreat you (command I shall not) that you will regulate your conduct by his advice. A solemn oath prevents my giving him his freedom, yet still I no longer consider him as a slave, but the friend of Selim and Ibrahim. On you, Abdallah,' continued he, 'I build my hopes of success, and in private shall expect you to give me such advice as you may, during the campaign, deem necessary. But forgive me,' added he, after a short pause, 'for requesting one thing, which will render my mind perfectly easy.' Before he could proceed, I interrupted him by assuring him that I guessed the purport of his uneasiness, and that although he must be sensible that liberty was the most precious

precious gift I could receive, yet that if it was to deprive me of attending Ibrahim and himself, and being as serviceable as I could during the ensuing campaign, I would not accept of it, so much did I feel for the generous manner in which he had constantly treated me. The old warrior caught me by the hand, exclaiming, 'It is enough, I am satisfied, and my request is needless.' Notwithstanding this assertion, I begged him to name it, which, with reluctance, and after much entreaty, he complied with; and I found that he was fearful I might take the opportunity of a general engagement for making my escape. I most readily forgave his suspicions, as I could not help confessing they were natural; and perhaps, had I not been sincerely attached both to the father and his son, his suspicions might have been realized. Thus, confident in the honour of each other, we left Constantinople, attended by a large body of horse, and proceeded towards the confines of Persia, where the Sultan Achmet himself was awaiting

ing our arrival. Selim immediately attended his sovereign, with whom he was justly a great favourite; but both Ibrahim and myself thought that his conference was unusually long. At length he returned, and after giving audience to several general officers, he repaired to the tent of his son, where the latter and myself were arranging a plan of action, which, if carried into execution with vigour, I was convinced would ensure us a complete victory. This plan was almost the exact counterpart of the one I have before mentioned, and which was so successful, when my father first gave me a command: it is also rather a remarkable circumstance, as you may observe in the progress of my history, that similar incidents raised me in the opinion of the army in both engagements. The presence of Selim, however, after the customary compliments, did not prevent our proceeding; and I had the satisfaction of perceiving that he not only distinctly comprehended the intention, but that by his looks, although
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at that time he made no observation, he entirely approved of it. It had been resolved to remain in the encampment we had chosen for some days, in order to refresh those troops that had marched from a distance, and at the same time to gain a more correct intelligence as to the position of the enemy. This delay enabled me to render the plan I had formed more perfect, which indeed had little reference to the main body, but was intended for the special service on which my young pupil was to be employed, that of conducting the body of reserve, a command of the utmost consequence; and I confess I felt myself most highly flattered at the confidence placed in me, as it was evident, from the youth of Ibrahim, that Selim formed his chief dependence upon me.

“Two days prior to that intended for our march, as Ibrahim and myself were sitting in the tent appropriated for me, an order came for him to attend his father, which he instantly obeyed; and as I was not included

cluded in it, I amused myself during his absence with revising the plan I had sketched out, so as to render it more complete. It was evening, and I had scarcely began my employment, when Selim and another officer, of whose person I was ignorant, but who, from his appearance, seemed to be of a superior rank, entered. I was rather surprised, as I naturally concluded that Selim was employed with his son ; however I did not deem it proper to make any inquiries before a stranger, but paying those respects I judged due, was preparing to close my labours, when Selim, who with his companion had approached the table, desired me to shew the plan, and also to explain the intended manoeuvres. This of course I readily complied with, but I could not avoid observing both satisfaction and a degree of astonishment in the countenance of the stranger, who, notwithstanding he freely addressed my patron in language sufficiently flattering, never deigned to open his lips to me ; this, however,

ever, I readily accounted for, as I made no doubt but that if he was, as he appeared, a particular friend of Selim's, he was also acquainted with my situation; and there were many, particularly of the higher orders, who were so inflexible in their dislike to Christians, as never to hold converse with a person of that religion, however gifted by nature or fortune. The stranger, after having fully satisfied his curiosity, withdrew, together with my patron, who, on leaving the tent, gave me a look of peculiar approbation, by which I well knew how to interpret the satisfaction he at that moment experienced.

“ Scarcely had these unexpected visitors departed than Ibrahim returned, to whom I mentioned the occurrence; for a moment he seemed lost in thought, but suddenly recovering himself, said with a smile, ‘ My dear Abdallah, I foresee that the visit you mention will restore you to liberty, which, was it not for your promise, I should almost lament, although rest assured that it
was

my determination, whenever I had it in my power, to have set you free, a grateful act which an unfortunate oath alone prevents my father from performing.' To this friendly intention I made the proper return, again repeating my assurances, that even if free, I would not leave him, at least not until the conclusion of the war, although, I observed, I could not see any likelihood of such an event, knowing how justly tenacious his father was of his word, and consequently much more so of an oath. Here the subject dropped, and after making some arrangements for the morning, we separately retired for the night. But the conversation had made so great an impression upon my mind, that although I soon sunk into a state of calm repose, fancy portrayed the goddess of liberty descending to my assistance, arrayed in all those attributes with which the glowing warmth of imagination ornaments her. In a moment, the chains that appeared to have encircled my limbs became loosened, and a voice

voice of more than common sweetness said, 'Thy virtues break the chains of slavery.' With these words the beauteous vision vanished, and I was not a little surprised when I awoke, to find that although the day had but just began to break, Selim was in my tent, contemplating me with an agitation in which, however, satisfaction and pleasure were equally predominant. Rather confused at being surprised asleep, I was preparing an excuse, when the generous chief hastily interrupting me, said, 'If any apology is necessary, it is due from me, as it still wants some time to the accustomed hour of duty ; but I could not enjoy the blessings of sleep, until I had performed a command the most grateful to my feelings of any I have hitherto executed. Abdallah, you are no more a slave.' Although I was in some degree prepared by the vision of the night, as well as by the hints of Ibrahim, for such an event, yet still the intelligence came so abruptly, that my usual fortitude forsook me ; I attempted to articulate,

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late, but words were wanting, and I threw myself at the feet of my benefactor, who hastily raising me in his arms, embraced me with paternal affection. In a short time, however, I became more composed, and after pouring forth the effusions of my heart, and repeating those promises I had before made to Ibrahim, I requested him to inform me by what means he could have been induced to grant me manumission, after the solemn oath he had so frequently told me he lamented having taken.—‘Before I satisfy you,’ said my generous friend, ‘permit me to thank you, both in my own and my son’s name, for the assurances you have repeated of remaining with us during the campaign ; for although I had no idea that you would forfeit your former promises, and which I find you again repeated last night to my son, yet the repetition has assured me of a continuance of your friendship, which, both on my own and my son’s account, I prize more than the riches which fill my coffers. But I will
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not keep you much longer in suspense; in short, you are indebted for your liberty to the stranger who came with me last night.'—This assertion increased my astonishment, which I could not help expressing: 'Have you no knowledge who the stranger was?' rejoined Selim.—I assured him that I had not, neither could I, in the smallest degree, solve the mystery, which appeared to me more inexplicable.—'Well,' rejoined Selim, 'I did not conceive you was so ignorant of his person, although now I recollect Achmet has seldom left the seraglio since his elevation to the throne.'—'Good Heavens!' I exclaimed, 'was it the Sultan Achmet who conferred such an honour upon me?'—'It was,' replied Selim; 'but listen, and I will explain the whole.

'The great improvement that Ibrahim had made in the science of war, and other accomplishments, were too conspicuous to escape public notice, and it soon reached the ears of the sultan. I must premise, that

a friendship scarcely ever existing between a sovereign and a subject, has been through our lives the greatest blessing both to Achmet and myself; and it is not his fault that I am not at present in the possession of the highest honours that the Ottoman throne can bestow. But I have always preferred the situation I now hold, to the more glaring, yet precarious, tenure of Grand Vizier, by which means I have hitherto preserved the esteem of my sovereign, without exciting the envy of competitors for his favour. As he extended his partiality to my son, the pleasure he received at hearing of his improvement was sincere, and he questioned me by what means he had been able to attain such excellence. Confident of his protection, although I was aware of having transgressed the strict law, I made no scruple of acquainting him with the truth; that it was to a Christian of rank, whom the chance of war had thrown into my power, that I was indebted for such able instruction. As I had foreseen, he not only overlooked

overlooked the breach I had been guilty of, but even promised me his protection, should any sinister accident discover it to my prejudice; at the same time, he wished me to induce you to turn Mahomedan, by persuasion only, absolutely forbidding any force or constraint. From that period, which was soon after your arrival, he has secretly overlooked all your actions; and finding you ready to attend Ibrahim to the field, it was at his express command, that the trust imposed upon you was committed to your charge, as he has an high opinion of the European officers, and more particularly as the fame of the Count Von Werdenberg had long been diffused throughout the empire. The plan you had formed for the inspection of my son was so perfectly correct and feasible, that I thought it a duty incumbent upon me to mention it to the Sultan; and although I could give the outlines but imperfectly, he was so struck with the idea, that he determined to inspect it himself unknown. The result you know;

but I must add, that on entering his tent this morning, I found the mufti with him, who had been purposely commanded to attend. On my entrance, the Sultan addressed me nearly in these words ; “ Can Selim refuse a favour to his friend ? ” Surprised at such a question, I immediately answered that I was always ready to obey the commands of my sovereign.—“ That,” replied Achmet, “ is not what I ask ; I have no commands to give ; mine is a favour from a friend to a friend.” You may readily guess my answer ; when the Sultan continued, “ You know by our laws that the mufti has supreme power to dispense with an oath ; it is the liberty therefore of Abdallah that I request.” Assured of your promise not to leave me at present, I consented with unfeigned pleasure ; and thus it is, my friend, that this magnanimous Prince treats those he favours.’—You may readily suppose that I extolled the generosity of the Sultan in terms appropriate to the occasion ;

casion ; and while we remained in conversation on the subject, one of the officers in waiting entered, and informed Selim that a messenger from the Sultan was in attendance: he was accordingly introduced, when turning to me, and bending on one knee, he presented me, in the name of that monarch, with a sabre most magnificently ornamented, acquainting me at the same time that he had it in command from his sovereign to request my acceptance of it, not doubting but that in my possession it would be used with effect against his enemies.

“ So unusual a present to a Christian struck me with surprise, which, however, was still further increased, as the officer desired us to leave the tent, on the outside of which, led by the attendants of the Sultan, was an Arabian courser of the greatest beauty, accoutred in the most sumptuous manner. I know not who felt the greatest pleasure at the notice this magnanimous sovereign took of me, Selim, or his son

Ibrahim. I must own, however, that the sensations I then experienced were the most grateful my heart had known since my unfortunate departure from Germany ; as I was now no longer the slave Abdallah, but once more Henry Count Von Werdenberg, possessing the esteem of one of the most powerful monarchs of the age, and the sincere regard and friendship of his most respected officers.

“The morning at length arrived on which we were to make an attack upon the enemy, who in numbers were far superior to us ; the main body of our troops was led on by the Sultan himself, supported by some of his ablest generals, while Selim commanded the right wing, and an officer of equal experience the left ; the reserve, at the head of which was my pupil Ibrahim, consisted of about fifteen thousand choice cavalry, which I had stationed in such a manner as to prevent their numbers from being perceived by the enemy. The conflict was dreadful ; both armies fought as if determined

mined on death or victory, and success was for some time doubtful. It was at this critical moment that the plan I had formed was to be carried into execution; our troops gave way, and the cry of victory was already sounded by the Persians, when the reserve of cavalry having, during the heat of the action, gained their rear unperceived, charged them with such impetuosity as bore down all resistance. A short period determined the conflict on the right, but the centre still remained engaged. Again we charged, and again the Persians fled: the slaughter was immense; but the greatest pleasure I experienced on that day, was in having the good fortune to preserve the life of the Sultan, whose bravery had carried him so far, as to penetrate the very centre of the Persian battalions, where he must inevitably have fallen a victim to superior force, had I not fortunately perceived his danger, and rushing impetuously at the head of a few brave men, rescued him at the very instant a blow from

a Persian officer had struck him from his horse; but before the stroke could be repeated, his intrepid assailant met his fate from that sword with which I had so lately been honoured. The victory was most complete; the Persians fled in all directions, leaving their baggage and immense riches at our disposal.

“ It was understood in the army that I served as a volunteer; this had been previously agreed upon by the Sultan, as in that capacity I could act, without incurring the prejudices of those most attached to their local customs. Achmet, who was determined to humble the Persian monarch, followed up this victory with such vigour, that the flying troops were obliged to take a temporary shelter within the walls of Basora, which city was speedily invested by the victorious Turks. It would be endless for me to enter into regular details of the siege, or to relate the various occurrences which took place during the space of three months, at the expiration of which time,
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the city was carried by assault ; a scene of carnage then ensued which beggars all description, while the devouring flames, bursting forth in different quarters, at one and the same time, added new horrors to the tremendous spectacle, of which none but those who have been eye-witnesses to similar excesses can possibly entertain any idea.

“ During this confusion I had penetrated into the palace, occasionally inhabited by the Persian monarchs, which had become the prey of the Turkish soldiers, who were enriching themselves with the various articles that were heaped up there in great abundance : as I well knew their natural disposition, and that to argue with them would draw upon me not only their indignation, but perhaps a severer fate, I was necessitated to behold this havock in silence, although I could not avoid regretting the despoliation of so many scarce and valuable articles.

“ While I thus wandered through the

spacious apartments, my ears were suddenly assailed by a scream from a female, which seemed to proceed from the interior. Impelled by an uncontrollable emotion, I rushed towards the spot from which I fancied it to issue; and in a chamber that, from its appearance, seemed to have escaped the general depredation, I beheld a young female imploring the compassion of a Turkish soldier; her face was covered with a thick veil, so that I could not distinguish her features; nevertheless I determined, if possible, at all hazards, to protect her, and calling to the Turk in a tone of authority, I bade him desist. At the sound of my voice he turned round, apparently with a design of resisting my commands; but no sooner had he discovered by whom they were issued, than dropping the point of his sabre, he promised instant obedience. Fortunately this soldier was one belonging to the household of Selim, and had conceived a great affection for me, as he had once been indebted to me for his life.

life. Pleased with this lucky encounter, I endeavoured to assure the fair suppliant of future protection, who, perceiving the influence I had over the man, so lately her terror, naturally supposed me of some rank and consequence, and readily resigned herself to my care. It now became a matter of consultation in what manner I could dispose of my fair unknown ; my situation was hazardous, as being a Christian, any Turk might have claimed and taken my prisoner from me : the soldier, however, I before mentioned saved us from this dilemma, as he proposed that he should convey the lady to my tent as his prisoner, which, no safer mode occurring, and he having by his late conduct obtained my confidence, I agreed to. While we were holding this consultation, the lady was employed in securing jewels of immense value, which were deposited in a cabinet at the end of the apartment in which we were ; indeed, she appeared very desirous of taking the cabinet itself with us, but

this was found impracticable. Fortune favoured my interference, and my lovely prize arrived safe at the quarters appropriated to me, where she remained under the protection of the faithful soldier.

“ On leaving the palace, I immediately repaired to the head quarters, in order to discover the final result of the assault, as from the moment we entered the city, I had never beheld either the Sultan, or either of my friends, Selim and Ibrahim; it was therefore with no little anxiety that I made my inquiries. Alas! I found that Selim was severely wounded, and that my beloved pupil had gloriously fallen in the contest. This intelligence almost unmanned me; but determined to pay every attention to the old general, I hastened to his residence, and without any ceremony or resistance from his attendants, rushed into his apartment, and was kneeling at his bedside even before he had perceived me. Scarce had the dying soldier recognized me, than raising my eyes, I beheld the Sultan

tan Achmet ; overwhelmed with confusion, I would have instantly retired, although my heart was bursting at the scene before me, when that generous Prince, reading my thoughts in my countenance, immediately dispelled my confusion, saying, in an accent so impressive as never to be forgotten by me, ‘ Count, we are met here not as the sovereign and subject, but as the joint friends of Selim, to pay the last duties, and soothe the pangs of the dying warrior ; resume therefore that station by his couch your affectionate gratitude entitles you to occupy.’ From that instant I devoted the principal part of my time to the invalid ; but my attention was in vain ; death claimed its victim, and left me to mourn the loss of a sincere friend.

“ I should now have felt myself an isolated being, had it not been for my fair prisoner, whose company contributed to alleviate the sorrow occasioned by the recent events. She seemed indeed as if allotted to me by Providence, as a compensation for
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my past sufferings; and as I was careful to pay her every attention, her confidence in me daily increased; and I flattered myself that in time my assiduities would make that impression on her heart, which I began to feel was necessary to my future happiness.

“ I shall not fatigue you with a particular description of the beauty or the person of Zulima; suffice it to say, that she was inferior to none of her sex; but what I held in greater estimation, I found her mind highly cultivated; this, if any thing had been wanting, convinced me that she was of no ordinary rank, although I dared not make the inquiry, lest I should awaken feelings that might ultimately militate against my wishes; for so sincerely did I respect her, that I am confident had she requested her liberty, I should have complied with her wishes, even if my life had been the sacrifice of my disappointment. She herself maintained a studied silence, and I observed, that whenever Persia was mentioned, she instantly endeavoured to change
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the subject, and seemed to feel a terror, lest she should be recognized as one of that country, for which reason she, in the very early part of our acquaintance, requested permission to keep herself entirely secluded from all, except those slaves who necessarily attended her, and whose interest, as well as oaths, kept them silent.

“ The state of my heart soon became known to her, and I had the happiness to find that her own was in unison with it; as candour was a conspicuous trait in her character, no false affectation delayed my happiness, and the lovely Zulima became my bride. It was a fortunate circumstance for us both that we were able to converse with each, as a slave who had formerly attended her, had made her mistress of the Italian language, and indeed had infused into her mind an idea of the Christian religion, so that I had little trouble in persuading her to profess it, which she accordingly did, at the same time when she made me
master

master of her person. This step was most hazardous, and we were obliged to conceal it with the greatest care ; for had a discovery taken place, so furious is the zeal of the Mahommedans, that our liberty, if not our lives, would have fallen a sacrifice to it.

“ Many very powerful reasons now induced me to attempt quitting the Turkish dominions as soon as possible ; for although the Sultan’s regard for me rather increased than diminished, yet he himself could not with propriety pay me those friendly attentions which, under the pretence of visiting Selim, he had been accustomed to do ; it was therefore only in formal ceremony that I could have access to him ; this restraint, so different from our former happy intercourse, determined me on putting my plan into execution, as soon as I could turn the principal part of my effects into jewels, they being more portable, and less liable to be discovered, than any other commodity ; but an event happened which threw

us into more immediate danger, and obliged us to quit our residence with the greatest haste and circumspection.

“ I have before remarked the reasons that had deterred me from inquiring into the parentage and connexions of Zulima, which, even since her marriage, she had kept concealed ; and as I was perfectly satisfied with the possession of my lovely bride, I forbore pressing a disclosure, convinced that some reasons of consequence prevented her confidence, although little aware of the potency of them ; but the time now arrived when I was no longer to be kept in ignorance.

“ On our return from the expedition into Persia, and at the decease of Selim, as his residence had become the property of others, I had taken a house on the shore of the Bosphorus, whither, by the assistance of the faithful Hassan, the soldier I have before mentioned, whom, at his own particular request, and with the consent of his late master Selim, I had retained in my service,

Zulima

Zulima was conveyed with the utmost secrecy. In this delightful retreat the time passed in the enjoyment of every satisfaction that mutual love could create ; when, as we were one morning consulting on the mode of our destined departure, Hassan entered the apartment uncalled, a liberty he had never before presumed to take, desiring to speak with me immediately ; the words were almost on my lips to rebuke him for his intrusion, when the anxiety his countenance too faithfully expressed, stopped the utterance, and I followed him in silence. As soon as we were alone, he informed me that an officer from the Sultan was waiting for me in my private apartment, upon business of the utmost importance. Astonished more than ever, I quickened my pace, and hastened to meet this unexpected visitor : on my entrance his back was towards me, but hearing me approach, he turned round, and I beheld Achmet himself. Confused, I stammered out some incoherent apologies, without knowing

knowing for what, when that generous Prince perceiving my agitation, kindly requested me to be composed, while he explained the occasion of the present visit. I must confess that my imagination instantly conjectured that his unexpected appearance had some relation to my marriage with Zulima, yet of the exact truth I had not the smallest conception.

“ As soon as Achmet perceived that I had in some measure regained my composure, (for I could not totally divest myself of my apprehensions) he regarded me with an affection he did not endeavour to conceal, from which, of whatever nature the communication might be, I augured more favourably of the result than my fears had hitherto permitted me; he then addressed me nearly as follows:—

‘ Count, the services you have rendered to the empire at large, would of itself be sufficient to ensure the protection of its monarch; but when, in addition to such important acts, the life of that monarch is likewise

likewise your gift, every tie of honour and gratitude strengthens that protection. The world at large, deceived by appearances, and imposed upon by the false glare that surrounds the throne, thinks nothing impossible to its possessor; and that at his nod all things are subservient to his will: it is true, that towards his own subjects the prerogative of the Ottoman Emperor is unbounded, and life or death hangs upon his breath; but when the interests or passions of neighbouring powers clash with his wishes, even with those most dear to him, it is then that he feels himself restricted; and reciprocal ties too frequently forces him to yield to policy, that which he would disdain to do to threats, or to force itself. The task imposed is hard at any time; but when it strikes at the happiness of one whom he is proud to acknowledge his friend, it becomes an act of tyranny more cruel than the most ferocious despot can invent.

“Your connexion with a beautiful Persian, whom your humanity and gallantry rescued
rescued

rescued from certain destruction, and your subsequent marriage with her, according to the forms of your own country, have been long known to me ; and no one could more rejoice in your felicity than the Sultan of the Ottoman throne. But alas ! that felicity it is now my ill fate to disturb, though I trust but for a time. Be not, however,' continued he, perceiving me change colour, as I instantly conceived the dreadful idea of having my beloved Zulima torn from my arms, ' too much alarmed. Achmet would with pleasure protect his friend, the saviour of his life, and the supporter of his throne, at the hazard of that throne, did absolute necessity require it.' These assurances removed a load of misery from my heart, which was nearly too much to support, when he inquired if I knew from what family my wife derived her origin ? I informed him that it was a subject she had always avoided ; and as I was perfectly satisfied with her innocence and beauty, together with the affectionate regard

gard she so evidently entertained for me, in consequence of the service she considered I had rendered her, by preserving her from the worst of insults, I had never pressed the inquiry, although my suspicion pointed her out as one of a superior class in society ; and that this suspicion principally arose from the temporary view I had of the palace she occupied, from the richness of its furniture, and more especially from the costliness of the jewels she was able to secure. I was proceeding to particularize some further reasons, when the generous Achmet instantly exclaimed, ‘ My friend, it is sufficient ; we have no time to lose. Know then that Zulima is of royal blood, niece to the Persian monarch, and who was intended to be the bride of her cousin, the destined heir of that proud empire. Her loss has been felt most severely ; for a long time he lamented her as slain during the tumult which raged through the city, that fell a prey to your superior knowledge in the art of war, and which,
being

being so completely fortified, was deemed by the Persians impregnable, and the most secure repository for their valuable treasures. Immense rewards have been offered for the discovery of Zulima, which at length has so far had the effect, that the Persian monarch has obtained intelligence of her having been preserved from the slaughter by one of my officers, who brought her with him into Turkey : this is however the utmost of his discovery ; but on this ground, vague as it was, he has been induced to dispatch a special embassy to me, requesting me to command a strict search for Zulima throughout all my dominions, and to send her into Persia, accompanied with the same pomp and ceremony as if she had never left that kingdom. What the intentions of the Persian monarch can be in this proceeding, it is difficult to guess, even should he succeed in his wishes ; and it was to convince you of the very high esteem I entertain for you, that I have thus personally interested myself in preserving

to you an object so deservedly beloved. There is but one safe method, however painful for me to adopt, did not a powerful necessity prompt the sacrifice. While you could have remained here, happy in your retreat on the banks of the Bosphorus, unbiassed by political motives, life would have passed away unclouded by mistaken prejudices; neither would my subjects have murmured at the distinction paid to the Count Von Werdenberg, although of a different religion, particularly when conscious of the eminent services they had received from him. But when a solemn demand, the refusal of which might again awaken the fury of war, is made, and that refusal is caused solely by a wish of giving protection to an alien, whom the established religion of the country, with mistaken zeal, enjoins us to view with detestation, it might not only prove fatal to the party supported, but also to the sovereign himself. Fortune, however, favours us by pointing out one mode of reconciling these difficulties.

difficulties. You, my dear friend, must, with your beloved Zulima, instantly leave my dominions, before the Persian monarch can, through his ambassador, make his demand in form ; the search I shall then order will of course be useless ; and although I shall ever lament your loss, the satisfaction of having sacrificed the charms of friendly intercourse, so seldom enjoyed by princes, to preserve the happiness of my friend, will prove a consoling balsam through the future stages of my life. A fast-sailing brigantine is now moored at the bottom of your garden, to which all your valuables are removed already, under the care of the faithful Hassan, with whose fidelity and attachment to you I have been long acquainted, and to whom I entrusted the necessity of your immediate departure, though not the real cause of it ; he has therefore acted by my orders. Time presses ; but I must enjoin you, although Fortune, envious of the happiness she has hitherto permitted us to enjoy, is about to place an

immense barrier between us, to dispatch a trusty messenger, to inform me of your safe arrival in your own country, where, blessed with the love of your Zulima, I trust no storms may arise to ruffle the smooth current of your future happiness. But we must separate ; hasten therefore to conduct Zulima to the brigantine, where Hassan is anxiously awaiting your arrival ; nor dread the loss you may sustain by this unexpected haste, as I trust you will find a remuneration, which, although inadequate to your deserts, or to the claims you have upon my gratitude, will, I hope, prevent your wants until you become reinstated in your own possessions ; and remember, while Achmet lives, that he shall always think himself indebted to the Count Von Werdenberg.'

“ Such, my friends, was the magnanimity of the Sultan ; the surprise I was in during his address, and the unexpected discovery of the exalted rank of my beloved Zulima, so overpowered me, that it was in vain I attempted

tempted to articulate my feelings. Falling at the feet of my benefactor, I clasped them, in an agony too real to be misunderstood ; and from that posture the name of Zulima, uttered by Achmet, together with a recollection of the impending danger, alone aroused me. She was totally unacquainted with the passing events ; but accustomed to a ready compliance with all my wishes, I was convinced she would take little or no notice of our sudden departure, more than supposing it some pleasurable excursion that I had hastily planned ; and I therefore determined not to acquaint her with the real state of the case, until we were perfectly free from the Turkish dominions. I mentioned my intentions to Achmet, who suggested that it would be more proper to inform her I was going by his orders on a special embassy, which admitted of no delay ; this, he observed, would prevent any questions which might otherwise embarrass me to answer, and would likewise be a more plausible reason
for

for the length of time that would necessarily be occupied in our voyage. This plan I of course adopted; and instantly hurrying to the apartments appropriated for her use, acquainted her with the urgency of the case, and that the brigantine in which we were to embark, was, by the orders of the Sultan, ready at the bottom of the garden, and waited only for her. I particularly requested her to take all her jewels and other valuables, under the pretence that it would be dangerous to leave them solely in the custody of slaves.

“ A short period sufficed Zulima, who betrayed no marks of surprise at the suddenness of the scheme, to pack up whatsoever was necessary; and attended only by two of her most favourite domestics, and my faithful Hassan, we joined the Sultan, who, having previously enjoined my secrecy as to himself, accompanied us to the place of embarkation as far as he could, without being discovered by any of the mariners; when, at the last moment, pressing my hand
with

with all the urgency of the sincerest friendship, he forced into it a cask^{et}, which, from its value, I was sensible he retained until it was out of my power to make any resistance or refusal to his munificence ; but the most precious of the jewels to me was the portrait of himself, set in the most superb style."

" May I venture a request," said Theodore.

" I anticipate your wishes," replied the Count, " and shall readily gratify them." He accordingly arose, and apologizing for leaving them alone, returned to the cavern, from whence, after having opened a secret cabinet, constructed in the interior of the rock, of which not even his most faithful servants had any knowledge, he soon returned, and exhibited to his friends a countenance whose features sufficiently displayed an energy of mind that struck the beholder with awe and admiration. Although the brilliants that surrounded it were of the most costly description, yet Theodore paid

infinite more attention to the former, and pictured to his imagination the dignity of action that must necessarily accompany so fascinating a production of Nature, where majesty and benevolence shone in such complete unity."

The Count perceived the effect which the portrait of the monarch caused in Theodore, and from those emotions that could not be concealed, he augured most favourably of his newly-discovered relative; while Sternheim, who had been equally observant, viewed, not without anxiety, those traits of magnanimity, blended with heroic intrepidity, which might plunge him into difficulties that would require the guiding hand of sage experience to extricate him from.

END OF VOL I.

THE
Black Banner;

OR,

THE SIEGE OF CLAGENFURTH.

A ROMANTIC TALE.

IN FOUR VOLUMES.

BY THE AUTHOR OF THE *BARON DE FALKENHEIM*,
MYSTERY UPON MYSTERY, &c. &c.

Fall'n in his crest, that late so dreadful rose,
His helm disgrac'd, no more its splendor shows;
His regal vesture strews the dusty plains,
And not a trace of all his pomp remains.

TASSO.

VOL. II.

LONDON :

PRINTED AT THE
Minerva-Press,

FOR A. K. NEWMAN AND CO.

(Successors to Lane, Newman, and Co.)

LEADENHALL-STREET.

1811.

THE

BLACK BANNER.

HIS guests having satisfied their curiosity, the Count proceeded in the relation of his history.

“ The morning on which we embarked was calm and serene ; no lowering clouds threatened to disturb our voyage, or to awaken terror, even in the bosom of the timid Zulima : ignorant of the length of time that was necessary to complete our voyage, or of the destiny that awaited her, (for I judged it better to keep her in that ignorance, until we were perfectly safe from any danger of discovery), she gaily
VOL. II. B made

made her remarks on the casual beauties of the various islands we passed, and seemed delighted with the novelty of the scene by which we were surrounded. The curiosity which she expressed to be made acquainted with the nature of objects she beheld for the first time, so engaged my attention, as to ameliorate the feelings my heart experienced at leaving a nation, where, although I had known the pangs of slavery, those pangs had been amply recompensed by the blessings of friendship; and I must confess, that, powerful as were the reasons for quitting the Turkish dominions, when the moment arrived, it required all my resolution to conceal the agony I felt, when I reflected that I had seen the generous Achmet, in all probability, for the last time.

“ Several days past in calm serenity. At length, fate doomed us to experience a sad reverse; the clouds gathered all around us, and a portentous flash of lightning, succeeded by the roaring of distant thunder, cautioned

cautioned the mariners to prepare for an approaching storm.

“ The vessel in which we were embarked had been purposely selected upon this occasion, by the special order of the Sultan himself; she was stout, and manned with the choicest soldiers; neither did the Turkish navy boast of a more experienced officer, than the person who was appointed to command her. It was some time, notwithstanding the fury of the elements, and the earnest entreaties of myself, and her faithful slaves, who were all most sincerely attached to her, that Zulima could be persuaded to leave the deck, so unwilling was she to be separated from me; until a dreadful wave, bursting over the ship, would have washed her overboard, had not the attentive Hassan caught her in his arms, and conveyed her insensible to the cabin, whither I accompanied her. Having, on the return of her senses, in some measure composed and reconciled her mind to remain there during the storm, the danger of

which I made much lighter than it really was, I returned upon deck, in order to render what assistance I was capable of in such an emergency. Although the tempest raged with the utmost violence, yet the spirits and hopes of the crew were enlivened by the conduct of the captain, who made use of every effort to encourage them, not only by his own example, but also by promises of future reward, although he privately told me, that his hopes of escape were very faint. This intelligence, coming from a man of the greatest experience in maritime knowledge, necessarily alarmed me for my beloved Zulima, who, ignorant that the next moment might be her last, was innocently amusing herself with her female attendants in the cabin: even the consolation of being with her was denied me, as the exhausted state of the crew demanded every assistance that could be given; it was indeed fortunate that employment was afforded to my mind, as it prevented me from dwelling on the magnitude

nitude of the danger; and I should have found it a very difficult matter to have regulated my feelings sufficiently not to have betrayed them to my beloved wife.

“ The night drew on apace, no friendly star afforded us the least assistance, and we were obliged to trust the vessel, by this time severely strained in all her joints, to the mercy of the winds and waves, as all management of her was entirely gone. Several hours passed thus on the verge of destruction: at length the tempest seemed to have assuaged its fury; and the black clouds, which rolled like billows through the firmament in awful and tremendous majesty, were broken by the bright azure of Heaven; the forked lightning flashed faintly in the distant horizon, and the bursts of thunder were heard only in low and dying murmurs; while the sun, gilding the extremity of the clouds, appeared preparing to break forth, and, by its invigorating and cheering presence, to give new life to our exertions.

“ On a sudden the shores of Egypt opened to our view ; and the once stately and magnificent city of Alexandria, founded by the Macedonian hero, and which he deigned to honour with his name, seemed to stretch forth her protecting arms, to afford us that relief our extraordinary fatigue necessarily required. With what rapture did I embrace my Zulima, when, hastening to the cabin, I assured her of our safety ! It was thus that my feelings betrayed me ; for although she was aware that the weather was more unfavourable than at the beginning of the voyage, yet it was the first time she imagined any danger ; and timidly upbraided me for keeping her in ignorance of it, and not permitting her to share with me the difficulties I experienced : her gentle nature however was soon appeased, and a pleasing serenity succeeded to our toils.

“ We landed at Alexandria without any impediment or danger, necessity obliging us to that measure, in order to repair the vessel, which had received considerable damage,

damage, before we could proceed on our voyage.

“It was now that I found the provident care of the Sultan of the most essential service to me ; as, prior to my embarkation, he had presented me with an order, written and signed with his own hand, commanding all his subjects, of whatsoever rank they might be, that, if I should find it necessary to land in any part of his dominions, I should be treated in every respect as his own person. Accordingly having confided Zulima to the care of Hassan, I, immediately on landing, requested an audience of the governor, and was instantly admitted. Although, in consequence of the Sultan’s order, I was certain of receiving every attention requisite, yet it gave me great satisfaction to find, that the officer who held the chief command in Alexandria, was one with whom I had, during the lifetime of Selim, formed an intimacy : this unexpected meeting was therefore most grateful to us both ; and as I had produced

the order before mentioned, he observed, that although such a command might have been requisite in many parts of the Turkish empire, yet where he presided, friendship would prove a more powerful inducement to render the place agreeable to me, than even the express commands of his sovereign; 'although,' continued he, 'I feel happy in the circumstance, as the name of the Count Von Werdenberg is venerated here as the preserver of the life of their Prince; and I am convinced, that the moment your arrival is known, that I shall be called upon, by the gratitude of the people themselves, to pay you those honours my obedience to the orders of my sovereign willingly exact of me.'

"Although this reception was highly flattering to me, as it proved the triumph of gratitude over prejudice, yet I wished, if possible, to avoid receiving such public marks of attention, and requested the governor to prevent it. My arguments were in vain, as he assured me, that should he attempt

tempt to oppose it, he should not only endanger his own life, but also the displeasure of his Prince. I was therefore obliged to receive those honours, which the city forced upon me, as soon as it was known that I was in Alexandria. What these were, it is immaterial to my general history to repeat: I observed, however, that my beloved Zuli-ma seemed elevated above herself, as she contemplated the satisfaction expressed in the countenances of all ranks, on my first appearance at the celebration of the *fête* given on that occasion. Prior to this, I had considered her as the timid, lovely partner of my life; but, when seated by the governor, and arrayed in the pomp of ceremony, she received the homage of the assembled multitude, the dignified pride of royalty shone so conspicuous in her countenance, that I should instantly have mistrusted, had I not previously known the fact.

“ I should have mentioned, that immediately after my first interview with the

governor, apartments had been provided for myself and family in the royal palace, where we were treated with regal magnificence. I sighed however for the moment when we should be enabled to reembark, and proceed on our destined voyage; and hearing by accident that there was a vessel bound to France in the harbour, which would sail in a short time, I resolved, if the captain could accommodate me, to take my passage in her; this step, I was convinced, would be satisfactory to the Turks, who would then be in less danger from meeting with any of the Maltese galleys, that constantly made prizes of any Turkish vessels they could overpower; and although neither myself or attendants would have suffered much inconvenience, yet I might have had some trouble in preventing the crew from being detained prisoners, and carried into slavery, so great is the animosity, which has for ages existed, between the Maltese and the Turks.

“ During our remaining residence at
Alexandria,

Alexandria, we amused ourselves with examining the curiosities of the place and neighbourhood, with which we were much entertained; yet it was with the greatest satisfaction that we received the intelligence of our new captain being ready to sail. We accordingly took leave of our friendly governor, and the generous inhabitants, who parted from us with reluctance, and forced presents upon us, nearly equal in value to those I had before received from the munificence of the Sultan himself. The weather proved favourable in every respect; and after a most pleasant voyage, we were landed in safety at Marseilles.

“The novelty of the scene was so interesting to Zulima, as to engage most of her attention; and as I perceived the great delight she experienced, I determined, before I returned into Germany, to make the tour of France and Italy. On landing at Marseilles, I, for the first time, disclosed the reasons of our hasty departure, and

found, to my greatest satisfaction, that the intelligence, instead of distressing her, had removed a great degree of terror from her mind, as she confessed that she could not help dreading the consequence of a discovery, while she remained in the Turkish dominions.

“Every necessity of secrecy being now at an end, a mutual confidence took place; and she disclosed to me the circumstances of her past life.”

Here the Count paused, as if considering whether he should relate the history of Zulima; which being perceived by Theodore, who was anxious to hear every particular relative to one in whose cause he had felt greatly interested, he requested, if his noble relative had no material objection, that he would indulge them in the recital of her history, prior to his having so fortunately met with her at Bassora. The Count readily acquiesced in his wishes; but observed, that he thought he would be much disappointed, as it contained little variety, except the customs of the Persian court,

court, in the education of the female branches, which indeed were similar to the other Eastern nations ; as however it would make his own history rather more complete, he should proceed, as near as his recollection would serve him, in the words of Zulima herself.

‘ I need not inform you,’ said she, ‘ that I am descended from that family which now fills the throne of Persia ; the present Prince being my uncle. My father, of whom I have little remembrance, long held the high post of Generalissimo of the Persian army, and contributed, by his valour and conduct, to rescue the troops from the obloquy which a long series of ill success had thrown upon them ; indeed, he had ingratiated himself so much with them, that I have since heard, that his brother, the reigning Prince, began to entertain a jealousy of his power ; whether such was the case or not, his fears were soon appeased ; as my father, being commanded to punish the insolence of a neighbouring chief, who
had

had raised the standard of revolt, fell a victim to that courage which had so often led him on to victory. My mother, who was before her marriage a relation, (for you know it is customary to connect yourself even with those of the nearest affinity), was for a time inconsolable; she refused to admit any one to her presence; and the sight of me, her only child, which would naturally be supposed to have afforded her some alleviation of her loss, produced the contrary effect; in consequence of which, I became as much an alien to her, except in inhabiting the same palace, as any stranger: but although I was not admitted to her presence, yet she was careful that I should receive such an education as was customary for the females of the royal blood. I was about eight years of age when the misfortune I have mentioned happened. Some few years before, my father became possessed of a Christian slave; she was a female, apparently about thirty years of age; but who still possessed
a countenance

a countenance so engaging, as to captivate the heart at first sight. It was on some distant expedition that he was employed when the person above mentioned fell into his hands; and ere he returned into Persia, her various excellencies struck him with such force, that he determined to make her a present to my mother, in order that she should teach me the manners and customs of foreign nations. You will perceive by this,' continued Zulima, 'that my father was no bigot; indeed, although he cordially professed the religion of his country, his expanded mind paid a due deference to that of others.

'My mother, whose mind was equally liberal, received Maria, such was the name she wished to be known by, with the greatest cordiality; and frequently repeated, that the present he had made her was the most grateful she had ever received from him. To this incomparable woman I soon became attached; to her was committed almost the sole care of my education, and

so

so eager was I to obtain her applause, that my proficiency in the various languages became the admiration even of my instructress: my parents appeared equally pleased with my attention, and the progress I made, and I may say that it was then I experienced real happiness.

‘ Among the various books that were procured me by Maria, there were several that, in some places, treated of the Christian religion; but I will do that excellent woman the justice to say, that she would willingly have prevented my perusing those passages, as she considered it a duty not to pervert my principles, however erroneous in her idea, from the religion of my country, in which it was most probable I should always be a resident. The expanded mode however of my education had burst through the veil of ignorance; and as I became more and more acquainted with foreign customs and languages, I became more curious in knowing the difference in our religious worship. I was not ignorant of the hazard

hazard I ran, should my intention be discovered, or of the predicament in which I should involve Maria; but an irresistible impulse seemed to drive me on, and, under the promise of the strictest secrecy, I at length prevailed on my reluctant governess to comply with my wishes. A sincere friendship was established between us, and some years past in unalloyed happiness, except when the thoughts of the important secret obtruded itself; fortunately however no suspicion was ever entertained, as I was more than ever cautious of performing the external duties of Mohammedism—a duplicity I detested, but which the safety of myself and my friend obliged me to submit to.

‘ It was known to the Persian court that I was the destined bride of my cousin, the young Prince. Fame spoke his excellencies, and extolled loudly his beauty; but as the customs of the East did not permit an interview until the ceremony of marriage took place, hearsay alone was the basis of my information.

mation. This subject often became a matter of conversation between Maria and myself, and, notwithstanding she dwelt forcibly on the pleasures that attend a throne, and the high satisfaction which a generous mind must feel in having it in their power to reward the deserving, yet I could not help contrasting this with the amiable liberty possessed by foreigners, of chusing the partners with whom they were to pass their future lives: it is true, she made me remark that all princes, at least the generality of them, were restricted by the same ties, and that what was termed policy, required this sacrifice of inclination. This observation, far from reconciling me to the idea, only made me lament the more that I had not been born in another clime, and of a race not sufficiently exalted, to be fettered by such ties.

‘ Although these sentiments had made a strong impression upon me, yet, conscious that I had no probable chance of escaping the lot I was born to, I endeavoured to reconcile

concile myself to my fate, in which the arguments of Maria considerably assisted me. Hitherto my life had passed calm and undisturbed, as since the death of my father, I had experienced no misfortune, which could render me unhappy for any length of time. I had just attained my seventeenth year when my beloved governess was taken ill; and, notwithstanding every assistance, died in my arms.'

"Zulima paused; nor could she proceed, until tears relieved her from the oppressive feeling which the recollection of past scenes caused. As soon as she was recovered, she begged to pass over her sufferings on that account, as she found herself unable to bear the recital.

'Time,' continued she, 'at length produced the usual effect; and as I was of an age not to be under a governess, a sufficient establishment was allotted me in the palace of my mother, who, however, still refused to admit me to her presence.

'The period of my marriage with the
Prince

Prince of Persia was fixed at my attaining the age of eighteen; it was a matter that I awaited with the most perfect indifference, as my feelings were not at all interested, neither had I then experienced the power of love. From this state of apathy, however, I was roused by the information that the Sultan of Turkey had declared war against my uncle, and that the Prince and himself were about to head the army raised upon the occasion. An intimation also was given to my mother and myself, that it would be proper for us to leave the palace we resided in, which being at some distance in the country, might be more easily molested, and retire to the city of Bassora, where we should be in safety. No persuasions, however, could induce my mother to leave that home she had so long been accustomed to, and where it was her constant practice daily to water with her tears, a tomb she had commanded to be erected to the memory of her beloved husband. The Prince, finding that he could not overcome her

her

her obstinacy, desisted from his importunities, at the same time insisting, that as he considered me as his future daughter, I should be at his disposal: this was readily agreed to; and, attended by a sufficient retinue, I took up my residence in the royal palace at Bassora. The event need not be related: I must observe, however, that when the city was taken, my attendants, instead of endeavouring to afford me any protection or assistance, deserted me: although, of course, I was much alarmed, and was sensible of the extreme danger I ran, my resolution did not forsake me: escape I judged to be impossible; yet I hoped to conceal myself in some private apartment in the interior of the palace, until the first fury of the victorious Turks was assuaged, when, should no other resource offer, I might throw myself on the mercy and compassion of some generous officer.

‘What my heart conceived,’ continued Zulima, giving me an affectionate look, ‘fortune kindly afforded me. The transition

tion I felt, when freed from the dreaded insults of the soldier who discovered me, is more than I can describe; his obedience however convinced me, that my unknown protector was of a superior rank; and I hesitated not a moment to accept of that refuge offered me. It is needless for me,' said she, 'to pursue my history further; let me only assure you, that I value the affections of the Count Von Werdenberg in a far superior degree than the Persian throne; and shall ever be grateful to Providence for having liberated me from the restraint the customs of my country subjected me to.'

Here the Count concluded the narrative of Zulima; and having received the apologies of his auditors for the request they had made, and the interruption it had caused to his own history, he resumed it as follows:—

“ I have before mentioned that we landed in safety at Marseilles. So great, however, was the native modesty of Zulima,

ma, that it was with some difficulty she could reconcile herself to expose those features to public view, which the customs of the East most studiously conceal from all but their nearest relations. Our retinue consisted solely of two female slaves, and the faithful Hassan, the soldier I have before mentioned, who were determined to devote themselves to us during their lives. According to the plan I had projected, we visited the most remarkable places both in France and Italy, though I studiously kept my real character concealed; we therefore passed for foreigners, whom curiosity incited to travel; and as I was now fearless of the Persian power, I had assumed the dress of a nobleman of that nation. The riches we had brought over with us, through the munificence of the Turkish monarch, and the subsequent compliment of the city of Alexandria, together with those secured by Zulima previous to the quitting Bassora, and which were of a value nearly equal to all the rest, empowered

powered us, without prodigality, to appear in the first style. We were consequently treated with distinction wherever we went; invitations poured in upon us from all quarters; and for a time we experienced neither care nor *ennui*. So rapid a succession of pleasures, however, soon began to cloy, and both Zulima and myself sighed for retirement; accordingly I prepared to return to my native country; and in our way to Germany, where I made no doubt of being recognized, we reached this neighbourhood, and were induced, by the report of the peasants, to pay a visit to a hermit, whose sanctity was the theme of every tongue. He received us with that cheerful affability which a mind that has long lost sight of the cares and troubles of the world will naturally assume; and at length so ingratiated himself with us, particularly with Zulima, to whom he explained the more intricate mysteries of the Christian religion, which she had so lately professed, that we were insensibly led to
protract

protract our journey, and to yield to his importunities of remaining some longer time with him. Each party seemed pleased with the arrangement; the neighbouring peasantry readily supplied the necessary encrease of food, and assisted in enlarging the humble cavern. Soon after our arrival there, Zulima blessed me with the knowledge that she should soon be a mother; this intelligence gave me the highest satisfaction, more particularly as I found that our new friend was perfectly conversant in the obstetric art. A lovely girl cemented our affection for each other, if possible, more strongly than before; but alas! I too soon experienced that perfect happiness is not the lot of man. Zulima recovered, and, with reluctance, we had prepared for the continuance of our journey, when a fever of a most inflammatory nature, which baffled every art of medicine, deprived me of one dearer to me than my own existence.

“ Here was a chasm in my life: weeks
VOL. II. c and

and months passed away, ere the skill and attention of the benevolent hermit recalled my senses to recollection. Heavens! what a moment! Gazing around the apartment, I demanded to see Zulima; a mournful silence, together with the tears of my faithful slaves, was the answer to my question; and I was again near relapsing into insensibility, had not the sight of my child, whom the hermit caused to be brought to me, roused my almost dormant faculties to exertion, and sustained my sinking frame. Time, however, and the well-placed admonitions of my friend, succeeded in rendering my mind more composed. He pointed out to me those duties which I still had to fulfil, and convinced me, that the way by which I could best shew my affection for the departed Zulima, was the exerting myself for the future welfare of my child: in short, his arguments were so just and convincing, that I most readily adopted them. The loss however which I had experienced, deterred me from entering into
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the busy scenes of life, and I resolved, if agreeable to the hermit, to remain with him, at least until the infant, who had been named Zulima, after her mother, was of an age to render it necessary to procure for her a female preceptress. This plan was readily acceded to by my host, who seemed to have lost much of his austerity, though not of his sanctity, since our arrival at his sequestered retreat.

“ Although surrounded by accumulated misfortunes, I did not neglect to perform my promise to the Sultan, by informing him of our safe arrival, and the subsequent disasters I had experienced. His answer fully proved the high regard with which he still deigned to consider me ; a regard so truly sincere and valuable, that would, I believe, have tempted me to have returned to Turkey, had not the consideration of the infant Zulima been a most powerful argument against such a plan ; for, notwithstanding the great friendship of the Sultan, I should have found it no small difficulty

to have educated my child in the religion which had for ages past been professed by my ancestors.

“ My determination proved fortunate, as, notwithstanding the mildness of his government, and the justice which all ranks experienced from him, Achmet, soon after I had heard from him, fell a victim to one of those ebullitions of popular fury, which has so frequently hurled the princes of the Ottoman race from the throne to the grave.

“ It seemed as if Fate was determined to expend its most venomed shafts on my devoted head. The loved partner of my heart had paid the common debt of human nature in the prime of life, and my dearest friend had not long survived her. Still there was another tie that attached me to the world ; the infant Zulima encreased in beauty, and promised to rival her angel mother in perfection, when one fatal stroke deprived me of this last dream of happiness.”

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The Count again paused; the recollection seemed to agonize him as severely, as if days only, instead of years, had intervened since that period. Recovering, however, his fortitude, he proceeded—"Had it pleased the divine Distributor of Justice to have called the lovely epitome of her mother to those celestial abodes of innocence promised to the just and virtuous, it would have been impious in me to have arraigned the supreme decree; but alas! even this boon was denied me."

"How," interrupted Theodore, in astonishment, "is she not—not——?"

"Alas!" replied the Count, "ignorance of her fate is added to the many other calamities which have at times nearly overcome my fortitude. But you shall hear the heart-rending tale. One morning I arose earlier than usual, that I might dispatch my confidential attendants upon some necessary business, previous to paying my accustomed devotions at the tomb of her mother: having dispatched them to exe-

cute my orders, I proceeded to the grave, accompanied by Hassan, whom I was obliged to take with me, in order to carry some necessary articles, leaving the infant Zulima in a sweet and refreshing sleep, while the hermit proceeded to a different quarter, on an errand something similar to my own. Having finished my devotions, I wandered for some time with Hassan around the grounds, in order to give him directions, in respect to some alterations, which had been planned between my venerable friend and myself. Ere I had finished my survey, the sun had cleared the summit of the mountains, and shone with refulgent splendour; I therefore hastened homeward, expecting to have met Zulima, then about three years old, awaiting my arrival upon the vestibule, as was her usual custom. Perceiving, however, she was not there, I felt an unusual tremor seize me, although, I confess, my fears extended only to her illness: Hassan perceived the change in my countenance, and, from having been

so long accustomed to our meetings, readily guessed the cause of my perturbation, and kindly endeavoured to relieve it by every soothing expression. No sooner had we reached the entrance of the cavern, than without waiting for orders, which indeed I found myself almost incapacitated from giving, this faithful attendant hastened to the chamber allotted for Zulima and her nurse: scarcely could he have reached it, when a cry of horror struck my ear, which proceeded from the direction in which the apartment lay: almost unconscious of my actions, I rushed forward, when a sight, more dreadful than the gorgon's head, encountered my eager gaze: upon the ground, wounded, and to appearance in the agonies of death, lay the faithful nurse of my beloved Zulima, while that cherub, who used to greet my return with infantine smiles of love, was no where visible. The alarm, necessarily created upon such an occasion, brought the hermit to

our assistance, who endeavoured to calm the first transports of our agony, in order to obtain, if possible, some intelligence from the wounded slave of the cause of this disorder. With the assistance of Hassan, for as to myself every exertion was paralyzed, the hermit placed the victim of fidelity upon the bed, and after examining and dressing her wounds, gave us the pleasing assurance that they were not mortal, but that rest and quiet were essentially necessary ; so that it would be some time before an explanation could be ventured upon. My friend however took upon him to have the grounds searched, as well as the neighbourhood around : no traces however of my lost Zulima could be found, nor could we gain intelligence that any strangers had been seen in the neighbourhood. A few days in some measure relieved our anxiety, but only to plunge us into the deepest distress : the nurse left in charge of the infant was deemed sufficiently recovered

vered to give us some account of the disaster, which had so suddenly overwhelmed the heart of a parent with despair.

“ She related, that in about a quarter of an hour after the departure of myself and Hassan from the cavern, three men, well armed, with their faces concealed beneath the vizors of their helmets, suddenly rushed into the apartment, as she had just completed the dressing of Zulima, who was impatient to repair to her usual stand; and, without uttering a syllable, one of them caught her in his arms, and, placing an handkerchief over her mouth, were hurrying away with her, when, recovering from the terror which their appearance had caused, she rushed forward, and attempted to rescue her from the grasp of the ruffian who carried her; in an instant she was herself seized and gagged; and in that state, after having given her repeated wounds with their sabres, the inhuman wretches left her weltering in her blood. She soon became insensible, nor recovered until the

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arrival

arrival of Hassan. I listened to this account with the utmost attention, and, as well as my agitated mind would permit, formed my conjectures upon the subject; indeed I at once suspected that the Sultan of Persia had found means to ascertain my retreat, and had determined to revenge himself upon me for the loss of his niece, by depriving me of the dearest image of her. I mentioned my suspicions to the hermit, who could not deny their probability. In order to ascertain the fact, I determined to travel into Persia, and to penetrate even into the recesses of the seraglio, or perish in the attempt. This hazardous and uncertain scheme, however, I was prevented from carrying into execution, by the prudent, and indeed incontrovertible arguments of the hermit, who pointed out my future duty so clearly, that, calling to his assistance the all-powerful aid of religion, he reconciled me by slow but sure degrees to my loss. Hassan, however, insisted upon making the attempt, nor could
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all I urged induce him to give it up; and, as he assured me that he would be particularly careful of himself, for my sake, I was at last prevailed upon to permit his departure. After about two years absence he returned, and by the authentic intelligence he procured, convinced me that my suspicions were groundless. Left therefore in the wilds of uncertainty, my days passed in a dull monotony, which was interrupted only by the death of my friend and companion, the venerable hermit.

“ The scenes I had been a partaker of in this sequestered spot had so endeared it to me, that I had determined never to abandon it, as here I have the melancholy consolation of daily contemplating the tomb of my long lost, though still regretted Zulima, which yon thick grove of cypress, interspersed with yew, conceals from the prying eye of curiosity. Your unexpected arrival, however, joined to the intelligence you have brought, may possibly induce

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duce me to quit my retreat for a time ; and convince the usurper Albert, that the family of Werdenberg are not to be insulted with impunity. How is it that I experience the solid wisdom of that advice, formerly given by the hermit, who, as if he had foreseen future events, most strenuously urged me, even if I persisted in excluding myself from the world at large, to make known my existence to the Emperor? his arguments were unanswerable, and I accordingly repaired privately to Vienna ; from whence, after receiving the congratulations of his imperial majesty on my unexpected return, I found it a great difficulty once more to retire to this sequestered habitation, as that gracious Prince would not only have willingly reinstated me in my former high employments, but would likewise have loaded me with additional honours.

“ Such, Theodore, has been the principal events of a life, chequered with the blessings

blessings and the miseries of the world, the varieties of which have, in some degree, taught me resignation."

The Count concluded his eventful history; and perceiving that the sun had nearly reached the meridian, he proposed to his friends that they should retire to the cool retreat of the cavern, where they might consult at their ease on the steps necessary to be pursued to avenge the wrongs of the Princess of Clagenfurth. Theodore and Sternheim, who had been much affected at the relation they had just heard, followed the Count in silence; every spot had become more interesting to them, from the recollection that their noble host had here experienced the two greatest opposites, the height of happiness, and the depth of misery. Serenity, however, accompanied them to the social repast, which the care of Hassan had provided, according to the usual custom. The conversation naturally turned on the various circumstances which they had heard; in the course of which,

Theodore

Theodore inquired if the Count had never become acquainted with the real name of the former possessor of the hermitage?

“It was a secret,” answered he, “that he carried with him to the grave; yet a few hours before his death, he informed me, that in a private recess, the situation of which he distinctly pointed out to me, were papers which would elucidate the mystery in which he was involved; but I confess, that my mind has been so much employed, their existence had escaped my memory: as I doubt not but that we can readily find the place, we will commence an examination.”

The whole party accordingly proceeded to the supposed spot; and after some little trouble, their perseverance was repaid by success. The papers appeared rather injured by time; but Theodore doubted not but that he should be able to decipher sufficient of them to satisfy his curiosity. They accordingly returned to the cavern with their new-found treasure, and so eager was

was he to examine the contents, that he would instantly have commenced the task, had not the signal, without which no one could enter the premises, been unexpectedly heard. The sound startled them, as it was a very unusual circumstance, when none of the family were from home, and at this time both Hassan and the two females were in their own apartments.

Sternheim, who, from the previous adventure at the monastery, was convinced that Albert would make use of all his power and art to obtain possession of the persons both of Theodore and himself, instantly conceived, that it might be some of the emissaries employed by him ; and mentioned the suspicion he entertained to the Count, to whom the previous circumstances had been made known. As this was deemed very probable by the whole party, it was agreed to act with more than usual caution. While they were thus in consultation, a second signal was heard, given in a more loud and hasty manner than the former. Hassan

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was in consequence ordered to answer it, while the Count, Sternheim, and Theodore, prepared to repel any hostile attack that might be made; and they doubted not but that they should be able to defend themselves, at least until the neighbouring peasants could be summoned to their assistance. Their fears were however soon turned to surprise, as they beheld Hassan bearing in his arms a lovely female, while a man of a noble appearance, whose bleeding wounds convinced them they were received in her defence, supported her as well as he was able. If however the general surprise was great at first, much more so was that of the Count, when on coming closer, he perceived that it was the captain of the banditti who was the protector of the female. Theodore had, on the first view of the intruders, hastened to the assistance of the beauteous unknown, and so much was his attention taken up, that he did not observe her companion. As soon as she was consigned to the care of the female slaves,

slaves, he returned to the party he had left, and for the first time recognized the well-known and formerly dreaded countenance of the captain of the banditti: the latter however appeared to have forgotten him, as he gave no indication of having seen him before; and Theodore was satisfied, that from the former hints of the Count respecting him, and the friendship with which he at present received him, that he was in no danger, should he at last recollect his features. They were of course impatient to hear the history of the unknown female, but were obliged to restrain their curiosity, as she remained greatly indisposed; and the captain, who was nearly exhausted by his exertions, and the quantity of blood which he had lost, was obliged to be carried, almost insensible, to an apartment, which had hastily been prepared for him, where every assistance, which the Count and his friends could bestow, was afforded. It was some time before the female slaves could recall their lifeless charge to

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to recollection; and even when that was effected, so much had her frame been agitated, that it threw her into a fever, which, for some time, threatened the most fatal consequences: youth, and a naturally good constitution, at length triumphed over her malady; and the roses again began to revive in those cheeks where the lily had so long reigned predominant. During her illness, she had frequently inquired concerning her generous protector, and felt a great satisfaction at hearing he was under the same roof with her, and that he was nearly recovered of the wounds which he had received in her defence; although, she observed, she was perfectly ignorant of the person to whom she was so much indebted. Theodore had been most regular in his inquiries concerning her health; the appearance of so much youth and beauty (for she seemed not more than fifteen), in so critical a situation, had made an impression on his susceptible heart, the strength of which he was not aware of; and he became

came impatient for the convalescence of both the invalids, hoping that he should gain intelligence concerning the unknown fair. The Count spent the greatest part of his time in the apartment of his friend the captain; and a full explanation took place respecting Theodore, who had been instantly recollected by him, although he had taken no notice of him. At length the parties met, and after the congratulations usual on such an occasion had subsided, the Count requested to be informed of the accident which had obliged them to seek the shelter of his retreat; at the same time, turning to the blushing beauty, who was seated by him, he begged to know by what appellation he was in future to address her? A voice that thrilled through the heart of Theodore, already deeply wounded by the shafts of the blind deity, uttered, "Matilda." Sternheim started, and turned pale; his visible agitation attracted the attention of the whole company; and, for the moment, put a stop to the required narrative,

rative, which the captain was preparing to relate. Matilda herself felt an alarm, for which she could not account; and, in trembling accents, asked the still agitated Sternheim if he had any knowledge of her—"For, alas!" said she, bursting into tears, "I have never known the love or attention of any parent, although the loss has been amply supplied by the care of my late revered protectress."

"Tell me," cried Sternheim, "under whose roof you have hitherto resided?"

"In the convent of St. Pierre," replied Matilda.

"Great God!" echoed Sternheim, who instantly fell back in his chair, overpowered by the sudden feelings which oppressed his heart.

The surprise of the whole party now gave place to the consternation occasioned by this event; the weeping Matilda, impelled by hopes and fears, threw herself at his feet, and, in a supplicating tone, implored the veteran to acquaint her if he knew

knew any thing relative to those parents she had never seen? This action of Matilda's roused the almost insensible Sternheim, and recalled his recollection: hastily raising her from the posture which she assumed, he gazed so earnestly on her countenance, as suffused it with blushes, when perceiving the confusion into which he had unintentionally thrown her, he replied, in a voice unusually solemn—"Yes; but they are no more." The tears of Matilda flowed afresh at this deprivation of those expectations her young heart had begun to form, and she awaited in silence the *dénouement* of her origin.

The assertion of Sternheim was not lost either by the Count or Theodore; the latter recollected the report which had been circulated at Clagenfurth, respecting the infant which the late Prince had by his former wife, and his new-born passion impelled him to hope that Matilda was the same; but the Count, who was ignorant of
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the circumstance, desired an explanation of the past scene.

Sternheim paused a few minutes; but, recollecting that the fact was already known to several, and sensible that in the Count, Matilda would find a powerful protector against all her enemies, he readily acquiesced in his wishes, and related what is already known to my readers; for Matilda was the identical infant which he had formerly entrusted to the care of the Abbess of St. Pierre, under the particular injunctions already mentioned. He was now impatient to know how she came to quit the abbess, and by what accident she fell into the power of those from whom she had so fortunately been rescued by the bravery and generosity of the captain of the banditti? To this inquiry Matilda could give no satisfactory answer; all that she knew was, that the abbess had, after a long conference with a person who arrived at the convent, and appeared in haste, called

called her in to her private apartments, and, with much feeling, acquainted her that a person was then within the walls, who bore a commission, which she could not withstand, to receive her into his protection, and to convey her to those who had the most natural right to her affection, when she would be made acquainted with the reasons that had hitherto prevented her being acknowledged by them—"Bred up from an infant," continued the interesting orphan, "in the convent, it was with the greatest sorrow I found myself obliged to quit the companions of my youth, or indeed my venerable protectress, whose kindness had ever been that of a mother; but her judicious observations, although given with tears in her eyes, in some measure enabled me to overcome my reluctance, and leave a society so dear to me. We parted, oppressed with mutual feelings, and it was some time before I could recover myself sufficiently to attend to my companion, who, I at length observed, looked at

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me frequently with particular attention. I entertained however no fears or suspicion of any sinister design, until on my request to know to what place I was to be conveyed, he refused to give me any answer, observing, I should be made acquainted with it soon enough. At this reply, so totally unexpected, I felt a faint sickness seize me, which nearly overpowered me, and my conductor seeing me turn pale, proposed my resting a little time, to which I readily acceded, for indeed I was scarcely able to support myself. This gave me relief, and I soon found myself recovered sufficiently to pursue my journey, which I did with some composure; for I reflected, that as I was entirely in the power of my companion, it would be more prudent to dissemble my suspicions, than betray them. We had not proceeded far, after the recommencement of our expedition, before we were joined by another person, who appeared well known to the one by whom I was accompanied; they entered into conversation

versation together; but it was carried on in so low a tone, that I could not distinctly hear the subject of it: some words, however, that were incautiously uttered louder than common, alarmed me greatly, and I first began to think that I was either betrayed, or that the intentions of those who claimed the power over me, and to whom I was to be conveyed, were far from friendly to me. The words that most terrified me were—‘It is a pity—youth and beauty—prison.’ This I applied to myself; and the following sentence, which I heard most perfectly, convinced me of the reality of my suspicions—‘What does it signify to us? we only obey the commands of our superiors.’ Much more conversation followed; but I was incapable of attending to it, as my mind was employed in planning my escape from their power; for so great were the terrors those few words I had overheard caused me, that I had determined to throw myself upon the protection of the first travellers I met, and endeavour

deavour to return to the convent of St. Pierre, where I made no doubt of receiving a cordial welcome. In this horrid suspense I travelled some time; no friendly form appeared to afford the wished-for succour; and I had almost begun to despair, when, on emerging from the last defile, I perceived a person walking slowly on, and soon discovered that he was well armed: my companions looked at one another, and I fancied that they wished to avoid the stranger, as they altered their direction. Fearless of what the consequences might prove, which I believed could not be worse than those I had reason to think were awaiting me at the close of my journey, I determined on soliciting the protection of the stranger. No time was to be lost; turning therefore suddenly, I ran towards him, and was as instantly pursued by the two men who accompanied me; my cries reached the ears of the traveller, who no sooner beheld me, than he flew to my assistance. What passed afterwards,

wards, I have little knowledge of, as, exhausted by my exertions, I fell lifeless, nor did I recover, until I found myself attended by the servants of the Count Von Werdenberg, a name I have been taught, by the venerable Abbess of St. Pierre, to hold in the highest respect ; nor shall I less esteem the generous stranger, to whose valour I feel myself indebted for safety ; to him I must refer the relation of the sequel of the late adventure."

Thus ended the tale of the lovely Matilda, who delivered it with an innocence, yet firmness of manner, that excited the admiration of her auditors, and completely fixed Theodore as her slave. At the conclusion, the Count assured her of his protection, and that in future he requested her to consider him as her father—" Alas !" added he, " had fortune permitted, I should now be in possession of a daughter nearly your age ; you must supply her place." A tear dropped down the cheek of the Count, which he hastened to wipe away ; while Matilda.

almost overcome by his kindness, could only utter inarticulate sounds of obedience to his wishes.

Matilda having ceased speaking, the captain proceeded to relate by what accident he had so opportunely arrived, to rescue her from her former companions—"You know," said he, particularly addressing himself to the Count, "the promise I made, when last we met, of paying a visit to this retreat, whenever circumstances permitted me to absent myself from those duties fate has imposed upon me, the difficulties of which are not unknown to more than one of my auditors."

At this observation, Theodore felt rather uneasy, which a sudden flush of his countenance easily betrayed. The captain perceived the change; and taking him affectionately by the hand—"Theodore," said he, "the relation of the Count Von Werdenberg must be the friend of the——" He appeared as if he was proceeding to mention his name; but catching a look from
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from the Count, he stopped short, adding, "at some future period you shall be made acquainted with my history; at present I shall only observe, that during your former residence in the mountains, I watched, though unknown to you, every action, with the eyes of the most affectionate parent; and your escape gave me uneasiness only as I dreaded you would become a martyr to those snares which I had reason to believe would be set for your destruction; for I was well satisfied that a branch of the noble houses of Von Werdenberg and Mountfort would never betray even those whose actions or principles he could not approve. But although," continued he, smiling, "you doubtless thought yourself secure and undiscovered, I soon gained intelligence of your route, and have constantly been made acquainted with all your proceedings, even to the time of your retreat to these caverns. Excuse this digression," continued the captain, "which the alteration in the looks of Theodore occa-

sioned; I will now resume the former subject, which indeed has some connexion with my late observations. Previous to my leaving the accustomed place of my abode, I had received information, from one of the numerous spies under my command, of the transactions that were passing in the city of Clagenfurth: the noble and gallant conduct of Theodore was related to me, together with his hasty retreat from that city, and the subsequent proceedings of Albert. Fearful of what might be the consequences, from the zeal of the numerous emissaries employed by that usurper, I instantly summoned my whole force, and after having administered to them the oath of secrecy usual on any particular occasion, I informed them of the rank of Theodore, and of the interest I had in his safety. This discovery, while it surprised them, gave the greatest satisfaction, as it dissipated every degree of alarm, which probably some of them might have entertained, in consequence of his escape; and they

they unanimously swore to obey every command I might think proper to give, and to sacrifice their lives in his defence. Thus being perfectly convinced of their fidelity, I divided them into different parties, with directions that they should endeavour to discover any of those employed by Albert, to watch their motions closely, but not to attack or molest them, unless on those particular occasions which were pointed out to them. The different arrangements were soon completed, and they left the place of general rendezvous in various directions. I had allotted to myself one task, certainly the most agreeable, as it was to pay my long promised visit to the Count Von Werdenberg, when at the same time I could consult with him upon the steps necessary to be pursued. I well knew that Theodore was in the neighbourhood, and thought it not improbable that I should meet with him at this sequestered spot, it being, I was aware, an usual custom for the Count to take his solitary ram-

bles around the environs, in order to render assistance, if necessary, to the wandering traveller, who, from the great intricacy of the roads, might easily be entangled in the various mazes of the surrounding mountains. My conjectures are, to my great happiness, well founded.

“ On emerging from a secret path, known only, I believe, to myself and those under my command, I perceived, at some distance from me, two men, accompanied by a female; they seemed approaching towards me: sensible that my appearance in that solitary spot might induce them to suspect the truth, for I was well armed, I cautiously retreated so far as not to be perceived, until they came near enough to ensure my overtaking them, should they attempt to avoid me; my plan succeeded; and when they had arrived within a small distance from the place where I had concealed myself, I came forth from the secret path, and, without seeming to take any notice of them, pursued my journey. But
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although I appeared thus indifferent, I took care to observe their motions; and perceiving that they were about to change their course, I was just on the point of turning, in order to pursue them, and examine into their intentions, when the cries of their fair companion for protection quickened my first determination, and I soon overtook them. The improbabilities of the tales by which they endeavoured to justify their detention of their fair companion, together with the strong assertions of the trembling maid, convinced me that they were engaged in some sinister design against her future peace and happiness; and I resolved either to rescue her, or perish in the attempt. Before, however, I began the attack, I demanded the name of the person by whom they were employed on such a diabolical mission; this they haughtily refused to tell me. One of the ruffians, who seemed to be the superior, then endeavoured to seize the lady and carry her off, while the other

attacked me with some violence. I soon perceived that I was much their superior in the use of arms, and it was with ease that I parried the blow aimed at me by the one who had engaged me. As the rescue, however, of the female was my first object, I disengaged myself from my adversary, and before he could rejoin his accomplice, had compelled him to relinquish his prey, and to defend his own life. The combat then became more serious; I felt that I received several wounds, which served rather to rouse than depress my resolution. At length conquest smiled on my endeavours: one was killed instantaneously, and the other so grievously wounded, as to be incapable of resistance. In this condition I offered him his life, if he would confess the name of his employer; but his fidelity remained unshaken. I would still have endeavoured to have saved him, had any assistance been near, in hopes he might ultimately be brought to confession. Circumstanced, however, as I was, my fair *protégée* insensible,

insensible, my own wounds beginning to feel uneasy, together with the distance from this retreat, added to the probability that more of his associates might be at no great distance, and by discovering him alive, might, from his information, intercept me, little capable of resistance, before I could place my precious charge in safety; all these reasons combined, necessitated me to put a period to his existence. I soon found that I had no time to lose, as I felt a degree of faintness diffuse itself through my frame; and though I had the pleasure of perceiving that life had partially returned to the interesting object, then my sole care, yet I dreaded the failure of my utmost exertions. Fortune, however, at last favoured me, although a frequent repetition of insensibility delayed our approach to the hospitable retreat of the Count Von Werdenberg, where, I make no doubt, the fair Matilda will find a secure refuge from the future attacks of her unknown enemies."

Here the captain concluded, and again received the sincere thanks of all his auditors, for the bravery and generosity of his conduct. Theodore had, during his relation, frequently expressed, by looks, his surprise at some parts of his narrative, which he now more openly avowed. The captain smiled at his inquisitiveness, which he observed was natural, although he was sorry he could not, at that time, gratify his wishes—"A period will soon arrive," continued he, "when every thing, now apparently mysterious, will be disclosed; neither will you be displeased at my present silence, when I inform you that my actions in this particular are guided by the obedience I owe to the injunctions of the Count Von Werdenberg."

This answer silenced, while, at the same instant, it increased the perplexity of Theodore, who, obedient to the hint, immediately dropped the subject. A general conversation ensued between the assembled party, Sternheim excepted, who had main-
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tained a strict silence from the commencement of the narrative; neither was it interrupted by the various observations made after the conclusion; these, as of course might be expected, turned principally upon the late events. Various were the conjectures made; but none were thrown out that promised an elucidation of the real intentions of Matilda's companions, or their probable employer. During the discussion, her thoughts had been employed on the unexpected intelligence which had been disclosed by Sternheim. Her young heart was not insensible to the pleasures she had been early taught were the attendants of that rank which she had been so lately informed was her due. It was not, however, the gaudy trappings of greatness, or the pomp and vanities of a court, which caught her attention; the venerable Abbess of St. Pierre had implanted in her mind the more amiable duties of those whom power and affluence placed over their inferiors. To assist the unfortunate, to ease
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the pangs of penury and want, to be a parent to the orphan, and prevent oppression, these were the pleasures which she taught were productive of the truest happiness, and the brightest gems that ornamented a crown. Such were the reflections of Matilda, when on a sudden it struck her that Sternheim, who had given so minute an account of her family, must consequently be well acquainted with its different connexions, and therefore might be able to throw some light on the subject which was then discussing. She had remarked his taciturnity, and fancied that she had at times seen symptoms of agitation in his countenance; on a pause which ensued, she accordingly asked him, whether, as he seemed to be so intimately connected with her family, he had reason to suspect any branch of it as likely to entertain any sinister designs against her? This question roused Sternheim from his reverie; however, he immediately answered in the negative, adding—"His suspicions pointed

pointed at another quarter; but since the hand of Providence has so unexpectedly conducted you to the protection of the Count Von Werdenberg, I trust that the insidious designer will not be defeated only, but that the plot, which he flattered himself would place innocence in his power, will ultimately recoil on his own head."

"To whom do you allude?" inquired Theodore.

"To Albert," replied Sternheim.

"Albert!" echoed the Count and the captain.

"Yes, my friends, to that politic usurper do I attribute this outrage; yet how he contrived to impose upon the Abbess of St. Pierre, I am at a loss to guess; nay, I dread even to think of the means by which the token, requisite to be produced to the abbess, before she could resign Matilda to the care of any other person, was obtained."

"What motives could Albert have to
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gain possession of an helpless female, one too whom he must suppose an orphan, bred up under the care of strangers?" asked the captain.

" You forget," rejoined Sternheim, " that prior to my leaving Clagenfurth, I had, with the consent of the Princess Adeline, given out the existence of a child by a former marriage; but of its sex, no mention was made; my reasons are well known: now I make no doubt but that by some treachery, at present undeveloped, Albert has made himself master of the truth; and in consequence, his prolific brain has suggested to him, that by obtaining possession of Matilda's person, he might be able, either by policy or threats, to work upon the mind of the Princess of Clagenfurth, in a sufficient degree to terrify her into a compliance with all his demands. Such, my friends," continued Sternheim, " are the grounds of my suspicions; whether they are well founded or not, time will develop; however, I am determined, if

if possible, to ascertain one point—the means by which the Abbess of St. Pierre was induced to consent to the departure of Matilda from the convent; should I prove successful in this inquiry, it may afford us a clue, that may enable us to unravel those circumstances which at present are involved in uncertainty and mystery. For this purpose, I will instantly set off for St. Pierre; a few days will be sufficient; and I trust the present friends by whom I am surrounded will await here my return, when we shall be better able to arrange our future proceedings.”

The arguments of Sternheim made a deep impression upon his attentive auditors, who, after the most minute scrutiny, readily admitted the probability of his suspicions; but although his intended visit to the convent met with general approbation, still they would not consent that he should undertake the journey alone, as it was suggested that more of Albert's emissaries might still be dispersed around the neighbourhood;
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and as Sternheim was almost an equal object of the usurper's hatred, his detention would, in some degree, compensate for the disappointment he would experience at not obtaining possession of Matilda; besides, should such an accident occur, his life would undoubtedly fall a sacrifice to the resentment of Albert against him.

These friendly insinuations would have had little weight with the generous Sternheim, whose courage rose superior to any idle fears, had not Matilda entreated him, in the most innocent and affectionate manner, not to throw himself, for her sake, into heedless and unnecessary danger; adding —“ It is to you I owe the knowledge of my birth, and from you I have yet to learn many particulars, which neither the time, or situation of affairs, permit me to be made acquainted with; let me then not lose, by unnecessary rashness, the only source through which I hope to obtain that information which can alone give permanent happiness to my unexperienced heart.”

The

The interposition of Matilda conquered; and it was some time in debate who should accompany him. Theodore most warmly entreated for that permission, but was peremptorily refused by the Count. He flattered himself, however, that he had received ample amends for the refusal, as he thought that a paleness overspread the countenance of Matilda on his offer, which gave place to a look of satisfaction on its rejection; even this incident, trifling as it was, fed the smothered flame he took no pains to suppress, with hope. The faithful Hassan was proposed by the Count, and would have been accepted, had not the captain of the banditti, who had hitherto been silent, requested to speak to the Count in private, before their final determination. They accordingly retired; their absence was very short, and on their return it was announced that the captain himself offered his services upon the occasion; but that it was necessary to wait a few days ere they undertook the expedition.

tion. This arrangement proved agreeable to all parties, as they were well satisfied the plan would not have been consented to by the Count, had it not been the most eligible.

During the time that was occupied in making those preparations which the captain had agreed with the Count were necessary to be adopted prior to the commencement of their journey to the convent of St. Pierre, Theodore had, by the marked attention which he paid to Matilda, disclosed to the watchful eyes of Sternheim the secret of his heart. The discovery gave that faithful adherent of the house of Clagenfurth great satisfaction, as it secured to the child of his beloved master the assistance of a family whose power in the empire was little inferior to that of the emperor himself. Yet amidst the pleasure created by this idea, the fear that the Count Von Werdenberg might entertain far different views for one destined to be the future possessor of his ample property, and the

the head of that powerful family, would sometimes intrude, and check his rising hopes. He accordingly endeavoured to ascertain whether the Count had any suspicion of the attachment which appeared to himself so visible ; for which purpose he narrowly watched his countenance whenever Theodore appeared to be engaged in an interesting conversation with Matilda. All, however, was placid ; no symptoms of displeasure clouded his brow ; neither did he seem inclined to interrupt their discourse. Sometimes, indeed, when in the absence of the mistress of his affections, Theodore would sit wrapt up in silent forgetfulness of surrounding objects, the cheerful veteran would rouse him from his pleasing meditations, by rallying him on his pensiveness, observing, with a smile, that those reveries were symptoms of a dangerous disorder. From these occasional sallies of good humour, Sternheim judged that no material difficulties would arise, should Theodore declare himself as the
lover

lover of Matilda; he resolved, however, to take no notice of the discovery he had made; but trust to time for bringing an event so beneficial to the orphan child of his former sovereign to perfection.

At length the preparations were completed, and Berthold, the captain of the banditti, having established a private signal, which alone would indicate either his return, or that of any one employed by him, left the caverns, together with Sternheim, accompanied by the blessings of Matilda, and the good wishes of the Count and Theodore for the success of their expedition.

The hermitage, although thinned of its inhabitants, lost none of its charms in the opinion of Theodore, who found more frequent opportunities of entering into conversation with his beloved Matilda; for the Count was so often engaged in duties which he never neglected, that the youthful lovers were insensibly led on to seek amusement in the company of each other.

other. It is true, the former, aware of the impropriety attached to the residence of Matilda beneath his sequestered and humble shed, without any female, except the old slave who had attended Zulima from Persia, had procured a young person, of an education and address superior to the generality of the peasantry in that neighbourhood, to be her companion. The presence of Selima, however, who constantly attended them in their various excursions around the domains, beyond which they dared not venture, was far from being a restriction to Theodore; indeed, on the contrary, it gave him greater confidence in himself, and he hesitated not to pour the flattering tale of love into the ears of the blushing Matilda, on whose heart, though she endeavoured to conceal it, he had made an impression, not easily to be eradicated. Notwithstanding, however, all her precautions, the natural innocence of her disposition prevented her from resorting to those acts of duplicity and coquetry, so usual

usual on such occasions; and Theodore soon found that her affections were all his own. His conduct upon this occasion served to establish his power more firm than ever: far from taking undue advantage of the discovery he had made, his behaviour was more delicate, more refined, than when suffering under those tormenting ideas which ruffle the mind, and discompose the actions of the doubting lover.

Situated as Theodore and Matilda were, it became a matter of course, that, pressed by frequent importunities, the latter at length confessed that her affections were his alone; at the same time adding—"That although the trial would be great, and more perhaps than she should be able to support, yet that nothing should ever prevail upon her to accede to his wishes, without their being sanctioned by the Count Von Werdenberg, whom both duty and inclination prompted her to consider as her sole parent. Even now," continued Matilda, "I feel a reproach of conscience for
having

having so unguardedly admitted an affection, which may hereafter prove a misery, instead of a happiness."

Theodore, with all the sophistry of love, kindly endeavoured to sooth the fears of his beloved Matilda, by assuring her, that it was evident, from the conduct of the Count towards them, that no material objections would arise on his part; he also pointed out to her observation many instances, trifling in their appearance, singly, but when conjoined, of material force, which plainly indicated that such a connexion would be most agreeable to him; indeed his arguments carried such conviction to the mind of Matilda, that her fears gradually subsided, and she gave herself up to the delicious ecstasy of well-grounded hope: but although tranquillity was thus restored to her, still she pressed her lover immediately to make the Count acquainted with their mutual inclination: this was a step equally desired by Theodore, whose sole hesitation in adopting it, was the fear

of a repulse. Urged at length by the frequent importunities of Matilda, he ventured to make known his wishes to the Count Von Werdenberg, who having long anticipated the request, disdained to trifle with a passion that met with his most cordial approbation; and from that time, Theodore was considered as the destined husband of the lovely Matilda. One drawback only gave some alloy to the happiness which reigned among the inhabitants of the cavern. The Count, although he had given his consent to the union of his young friends, made it an indispensable restriction, that such an event should not take place until the war in which they were about to engage for the recovery of their rights, usurped by Albert, was concluded; the reasons he gave for this delay were so forcible and conclusive, that even the impatience of Theodore was obliged to yield to his representations, although he would readily have dispensed with the cautious policy adopted upon so interesting an occasion;

casion ; while Matilda, conscious that the Count acted from motives the most conducive to their future happiness, soothed the more impetuous passions of her lover, by a tender display of that affection, the basis of which was innocence and virtue.

While the transactions we have related were passing in the sequestered retreat of the Count Von Werdenberg, Albert, to whom the departure of Theodore, and the subsequent escape of Sternheim from Clagenfurth, were soon made known by those spies specially appointed to watch the motions of the latter, became infuriated at the intelligence. So terrifying indeed was his rage, that his most confidential attendants were fearful of approaching him, lest he should wreak an indiscriminate vengeance upon them. At length, after repeated summonses, some of them ventured to the apartment to which he had retired ; instant orders were given to disperse in every direction, and to bring back the traitor Sternheim, alive or dead. The

arrest of Theodore was a secondary consideration ; the commands, therefore, he issued respecting him were not so peremptory, and extended solely to the discovery of the route he had taken, the watching all his motions, and the sending early information of all his designs.

The obsequious attendants gladly prepared to execute his commands, happy in escaping from the dreaded anger of their master, whose nature seemed totally reversed. The country now became traversed in every direction by the numerous spies employed upon the occasion, some of whom had the good fortune to ascertain the route of the fugitives : they accordingly traced them, as before related, to the monastery, from which supposed sacred asylum they so narrowly escaped. Their departure, however, from thence was soon discovered, and the pursuit recommenced anew with redoubled vigour ; nor did the emissaries of Albert lose sight of their wished-for prey, until they arrived at the
habitations

habitations of the fishermen, in whose huts they had taken shelter. Fortunately Theodore and Sternheim had left this temporary security, on their expedition to the mountains, where chance threw the Count Von Werdenberg in their way, whose retreat afforded them a safe protection; and although their pursuers were convinced that the objects of their search were still in the neighbourhood, or perhaps had concealed themselves among those tremendous precipices, that seemed to deny a further passage to the traveller, still they could make no further discovery. Fear prevented them from ascending the mountains which they beheld, as report had spread far and near the terrific appearance of the banditti who inhabited them; nor were they ignorant, should fortune throw them into their power, of the probable fate that awaited them.

They now consulted what conduct it would be most prudent to pursue, as the employment they had undertaken was ren-

dered nugatory. Sensible, however, of the impatience of Albert, they determined on their return to the city of Clagenfurth, although in the greatest terror at their probable reception, in consequence of their ill success. Nor were their fears groundless; for Albert, grown still more outrageous than before at the certainty of the escape of his intended victims, would have sacrificed them upon the spot, had not those who were near him dared, at the hazard of their lives, to prevent him. Foiled in the gratification of revenging his disappointment on the innocent emissaries, he rushed from the apartment in which he had received them, and sought the interior of the palace, where, throwing himself upon a couch, his mind, agitated by a thousand various passions, became a chaos of confusion, until worn out by exertion, he fell into a temporary state of forgetfulness: it was not, however, that placid repose which renovates and invigorates the weary mind; frequent startings sufficiently

betrayed

betrayed his agitation, and his conscience, apparently stricken by a review of his past actions, seemed to "murder sleep." His distracted fancy painted to him in glaring colours the sad remains of the Prince of Clagenfurth unburied, and treated with every indignity, while his shade, flitting before his view, uttered in doleful, but solemn accents—" *Vengeance is awake—repent or die!*" Roused by the fancied denunciation of his fate, he rushed from the couch, on which he had thrown himself, and gazed wildly around the spacious apartment, as if expecting to behold the murdered Prince. All, however, was vacant; but although no substance met his inquiring eye, the dreadful sound still seemed to ring in his ears.

From this state, almost bordering upon madness, he was relieved by the entrance of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, who having heard from some of the attendants, whose duty it was to keep guard in the anti-chamber, of the circumstances under which their

chief had retired, hastened into his apartment, trusting that his presence would be grateful to his friend; for although the recent conduct of Albert, particularly towards Theodore, together with the discovery he had so unexpectedly made, which he kept with the most scrupulous secrecy within his own breast, had considerably lessened his attachment to him, still he could not reconcile himself to desert his cause, at a time when his mind appeared so distracted, as to be scarcely capable of acting according to the common dictates of reason. Ever since the interesting knowledge which he gained during his interview with the Princess Adeline, D'Armfeldt had formed in his own mind the line of conduct he intended should be the guide of his future actions, from which he determined, whatever difficulties might occur, or dangers threaten, never to deviate. He had well weighed, and entertained a just idea of the obligations under which he lay to Albert, who had raised him from obscurity to eminence, from indigence

gence to opulence. Fate had, however, dispelled the mist of ignorance, which had so many years concealed the fortunes of his family, and he found that he had duties to fulfil superior even to the claims of friendship; duties which, according to the existing circumstances, would in all probability so materially clash with his engagements to Albert, as to force him ultimately not only to relinquish his friendship, but even to become his enemy.

As soon as the mind of the chief had, by the entrance of D'Armfeldt at so critical a moment, recovered from the shock it had experienced by the impression which the fancied vision imprinted on it, he entered upon the subject of the late occurrences; but although he appeared to open his intentions fully to the Chevalier, yet he cautiously concealed his real designs, being convinced that they were such as the stern principles of honour, which he had lately experienced to reign predominant in his breast, would never permit him to countenance,

nance. The conversation, therefore, turned principally upon the warlike preparations which were carried on by the neighbouring Barons, the purport of which, notwithstanding his address, he was unable to fathom; and sensible that he had, by his past conduct, merited the resentment of many of the most powerful of those who were engaged in forming these warlike designs, he determined to forestall their intentions, of whatsoever nature they might be, by sending a strong force to the frontiers of the principality, while, at the same time, the city of Clagenfurth was so completely fortified, as to bid defiance to any sudden attack.

The Chevalier D'Armfeldt was destined to command this force, notwithstanding the suspicions of his loyalty, which frequently intruded on the mind of the chief; but to a view of pursuing his secret intentions uncontrouled, he determined to sacrifice every minor consideration; and the removal of the Chevalier, purposely employed upon a mission,

mission, which being of a trusty and honourable nature, he fancied would prevent him from penetrating into his real motives, gave him full scope to execute his projects. In this instance Albert was successful, and completely overreached the Chevalier, who, lulled into security by the confidence placed in him, by investing him with the power over a body of troops already sincerely attached to him, and by whose assistance, had his principles been less honourable, he might have hurled the usurper from the high station he filled, departed from Clagenfurth, amidst the prayers and good wishes of the citizens for his success. These acclamations, however, pierced the heart of Albert more sharp than the dagger's point; and he hastily retired from the scene to meditate on his long-projected design, which was to make himself master, either by craft or force, of the person of the Princess Adeline.

In order to execute this daring project with any prospect of success, it was abso-

lutely necessary that his design should be committed to the confidence of some person, over whose mind and principles he could have the entire controul; but although there were many who Albert well knew would, for the sake of gold, or the prospect of future honours, readily obey any commands he might be induced to issue, which tended to bring his plans to perfection, should they even prove of the most sanguinary nature, yet it was not so easy to find a person in whom courage, address, and villany were completely concentrated; and for a long time his mind wavered in uncertainty. His good, or, as it may perhaps be more properly denominated, his ill fortune at last fixed upon a man, who had lately made his appearance at Clagenfurth, and who had, through the medium of some of the officers attendant on the court, frequently preferred petitions to Albert for employment in his service. These had hitherto been overlooked and disregarded; but, circumstanced as he was,

he judged that by granting his request, and at the same time holding out the prospect of future honours and preferment, he should be able to render him totally dependant on his wishes, and servilely obedient to his commands.

Notwithstanding, however, he had in his own mind finally made his determination, his natural caution, joined to a suspicion of all around him, induced him first to inquire more minutely into the character he had assumed and maintained since his arrival at Clagenfurth; but no one either knew his connexions, or from whence he came, as he had constantly kept a strict silence respecting himself. He was generally remarked as a man of a sullen, gloomy disposition, one who had suffered under the frowns of the world; though his natural resolution appeared to have enabled him to counteract their effect, and to render him superior to those misfortunes which in the earlier part of his life he had most probably experienced. Such were the
sentiments

sentiments which the inhabitants of Clagenfurth entertained of him; and it was this kind of conduct, which by many was considered merely as arising from a laudable pride, that induced some of the officers, who were more immediately in official attendance at the court of Albert, to forward the petitions he requested.

As Albert found he could obtain no other information respecting this stranger than that which was so vague and uncertain, he came to the resolution of examining him personally, and trust to his own discrimination for the development of his character. He accordingly commanded that the person who had so frequently sent petitions requesting to be admitted into his service, should attend him at a particular hour the next morning. The officers, who had previously befriended this mysterious personage, were rejoiced at the order, as, little suspecting the real cause, they flattered themselves that this attention of Albert's was a proof of the interest they themselves

themselves possessed at court ; and accordingly they lost no time in making their *protégée*, as they deemed him, acquainted with the success with which their endeavours had, by perseverance, and the great influence they possessed over the mind of their chief, at last been crowned ; at the same time pointing out the very particular honour conferred upon him, in being ordered to attend at an hour which was accustomed to be reserved as sacred to the privacy of their sovereign.

Although the stranger was no dupe to these artifices of the courtier tribe, yet policy taught him not to undeceive them, as to his belief in the power they wished to insinuate that they were in possession of ; thanking them, therefore, for the interest which they took in his future welfare, and repeating promises of eternal gratitude, as equal in sincerity as those he himself had previously received from them, he prepared to attend the chief at the hour appointed. During his walk to the palace
from

from the residence he had chosen while at Clagenfurth, and which he had selected as less liable to observation than most other situations in that populous city, he pondered in his mind what business it could possibly be that could induce Albert to grant him, an entire stranger, a private audience—an honour, he well knew from his own observation, to which scarce any of his subjects, except the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, were ever admitted. Various were his conjectures; but on a minute scrutiny of them, all were so wild and improbable, that they vanished as soon as formed. He had, however, during his short residence at Clagenfurth, made himself perfectly acquainted with the transactions in which Albert had borne so conspicuous a share; and had also, though with the utmost caution in the inquiry, gained a tolerable insight into the temper and disposition of that chief, together with the political measures which his recent conquest might induce him to put in practice. He well knew his
own

own adroitness at intrigue; and the hope, before almost extinct, of rendering himself conspicuous in the world, roused that ambition with which his soul was by nature impregnated; and he instantly determined that no scrupulous delicacy, either of honour or conscience on his part, should prevent his ingratiating himself into the regard of his chief, by paying implicit obedience to his wishes, whenever he was entrusted with them.

In this disposition he arrived at the palace; and being announced by the proper officer as the Chevalier Martuccio, the name by which he had been known at Clagenfurth, he was instantly admitted to the presence of Albert, who was waiting his arrival with the utmost impatience, so eager and impetuous was he to entrust those measures to a confidant, the sole consideration of which tormented a conscience that had not as yet grown quite callous to compunction.

The figure of Martuccio struck Albert
with

with an agreeable surprise, as he fancied he could easily trace in his countenance those traits, which would render his services of the greatest value to him. After the first introduction, he commanded his attendants to withdraw, giving strict orders that he should not be interrupted while the Chevalier was with him, on any account whatsoever. As soon as these commands were obeyed, he addressed his intended confidant with that easy familiarity he so well knew how to assume, making even an apology for having so long neglected the various applications which had been made on his account, and placing his inattention to the confusion which the conquest of Clagenfurth had caused, and which, although a considerable time had elapsed since that event had taken place, was as yet not sufficiently regulated; adding, in an artful manner, that a man of the Chevalier's disposition, who must, in the extensive travels he had undertaken, made men and manners his study, could not be otherwise

wise

wise than aware of the multiplied and arduous duties attached to the chief of a people at any time, but more especially when they became his subjects by the right of conquest.

The obsequious Chevalier bowed to this acknowledgment; and, with the utmost humility, thanked the Prince for his great condescension, in thinking him worthy of being admitted into his service, assuring him that he was ready to sacrifice his life, should it be necessary, to accomplish any commands he might hereafter be honoured with. After this first introduction, in which the views of the Prince were partially laid open to his new confidant, their conferences became very frequent; and the courtiers beheld, with no small envy and astonishment, an upstart foreigner in the possession of that confidence and favour of their Prince, which they thought was with greater justice due to themselves only. Various cabals were instantly formed against the new favourite, through whose medium

medium only were those honours to be obtained, which, previous to his introduction at court, had been voluntarily bestowed by the hands of the Prince himself. It was in vain, however, that they attempted to weaken the attachment of Albert to his newly-acquired friend, as the complaints which they made against the abuse of the power with which he had been entrusted, were either disregarded, or, as more frequently was the case, the daring calumniators paid the forfeit of their imprudence, by losing those employments they had hitherto enjoyed in peace; and many thought themselves happy, if by such a sacrifice they could escape the vengeance they had roused by their just, though ill-timed representations.

The artful Martuccio had made such good use of his time, as to become completely master of Albert's dearest secrets; and he perceived, with no little satisfaction, a wide scope wherein he might gratify his insatiable ambition. His greatest fear was
respecting

respecting the return of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, in whom he dreaded he should experience a powerful rival in the bosom of the Prince ; but resolving not to anticipate an evil which might probably be at a great distance, he contented himself with placing a trusty spy over his actions, who would give him timely notice of his intentions, should he meditate a return to Clagenfurth.

The whole city now groaned under the tyranny of Albert, who, conscious of his latent intentions, either banished those of whom he had the smallest dread, or confined them in the dreary, though spacious apartments of the Castle ; and scarce a day passed but some unhappy victim of his terrors experienced the fatal truth, " that a tortured conscience finds no rest but in the exercise of its accustomed cruelties."

Notwithstanding every precaution was taken by the usurper to prevent the knowledge of the transactions within the city of Clagenfurth from reaching the convent of
St.

St. Veil, in which the Princess Adeline had taken refuge, yet the abbess found means to procure every material intelligence, undetected by the numerous spies of the tyrant. The departure of her brother Theodore gave her sincere pleasure, as, during his residence in the city, where he was subject to the caprice of her inveterate enemy, her mind was in perpetual dread, lest his spirit should break out with such violence, as to excite the most sanguinary revenge in the bosom of the conqueror. It has been already seen that her fears were in great danger of being realized, and that most probably Theodore would have fallen a victim to the anxiety of Albert, had it not been for the generous intervention of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, which was also aided by the terrors of superstition. It was, however, fortunate for her peace of mind that the subsequent proceedings of Albert against the brave youth were concealed from her, until all danger from the pursuit was over; neither might she ever
have

have come to the knowledge of it, had not accident brought a monk from the monastery (in which Theodore and Sternheim had taken shelter, and had so narrowly escaped from the treacherous hospitality afforded them) to the convent of St. Veil, on some business relative to religion, both the convent and monastery being within the jurisdiction of the same superior. This monk, in the course of conversation, after the business he was employed on was settled, mentioned the occurrence, although he was ignorant of the parties concerned, or of the interest any one in the convent of St. Veil had in the narrative. The Princess was, as before observed, universally beloved by all the sisterhood, and those to whom this tale was related, judging, from some circumstances which had previously come to their knowledge, that Theodore and Sternheim were the parties alluded to by the monk, thought it necessary to inform the abbess of it, that she might exercise her discretion as to the prudence

dence of making their royal *protégée* acquainted with the circumstance. This, after due consideration, the abbess determined to do ; for, as they had escaped the snare laid for them, she thought it better that Adeline should receive an account of the transaction from one who was upon the spot, which would consequently prevent any forged or mutilated account from giving her uneasiness in future, particularly as she was well aware of the various manœuvres practised by Albert, and knew not but that he might, by some means or other, turn the report to his own advantage. Before, however, she communicated the circumstance to her friend, she judged it best to have a personal conference with the monk, whose character she well knew would stand the test of inquiry, for the piety of his sentiments, and his just, but unostentatious observance of his religious duties. Accordingly she requested his attendance in her private apartments, and after obtaining his most solemn promise of

secrecy,

secrecy, she acquainted him with the leading features of Adeline's history, and also with the circumstances that had come to her knowledge respecting Theodore, who, by his account, was one of the persons that had taken refuge in the monastery. During the recital, the monk exhibited the different feelings which his mind experienced; and he shuddered at the idea that religion should be made the cloak of such diabolical treachery. He confessed, however, that he felt himself happy in not having known the transaction at the time, as his zeal for the honour of the house might have, by an untimely discovery, proved fatal to those whom he should have thought it his duty to have protected to the utmost of his power.

The abbess, having obtained such knowledge as she judged sufficiently satisfactory, dismissed the monk with thanks, not before, however, he had offered his cordial assistance in the cause of the injured Princess, should his interference be at any

time necessary : and as soon as he had taken his leave, she proceeded to the apartments allotted to her friend.

After discoursing upon various subjects, she cautiously introduced the name of Theodore, and by degrees unfolded the events which had happened to him subsequent to his hasty departure from Clagenfurth ; for although she was well acquainted with the strength of mind possessed by the Princess, yet still she thought that, as she placed her whole dependence upon the exertions of her brother, his danger would alarm her in too great a degree ; as notwithstanding he had escaped for the present, yet the perseverance of his inveterate foe might ultimately be successful.

The Princess, however, heard the account with tolerable calmness ; still the ideas of future dangers had their full force on her mind, and caused a seriousness upon her countenance, too discernible to escape the notice of the abbess, who dreaded that she would again relapse into that love of solitude,

tude, from which she had been with so much difficulty roused. Fortunately her fears were vain, for Adeline, sensible that the more the dangers which surrounded her accumulated, the greater was the necessity which existed that she should fortify her mind against them, and exert her powers of action to diminish their weight, soon recovered that firmness which the information of the monk had disturbed, but not destroyed; and hinted that if it was consonant to the rules of the convent, she should be glad to have some conversation with him; more particularly to ascertain who the companion of Theodore was, that had arrived so opportunely at the monastery. This, however, was a satisfaction which was out of the power of the abbess at that instant to obtain her; not from any form or rule forbidding the interview, but because the monk, not conceiving his presence to be any longer necessary, had left the convent instantly, on his return to the monastery. The Princess felt rather dis-

appointed at this information; especially as the abbess could give her no description of the person she so much wished to identify; she was not, however, doomed to any long suspense, as, while they were busy in conjectures, the trusty emissary employed by the abbess to obtain the knowledge of the transactions in the city of Clagenfurth returned, and at the pressing request of Adeline, was commanded to be admitted into her apartment.

The intelligence he brought was of the utmost importance to the attentive auditors; as he minutely described not only the sudden departure of Sternheim, and the absence of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt upon an expedition, of the real intent of which the citizens of Clagenfurth were, he observed, in total ignorance, but also the unexpected appearance of the stranger, his great power, together with the unbounded confidence placed in him by Albert; adding, at the same time, that the whole principality groaned under an excess

cess of tyranny; and that he was confident there wanted only an head to rouse the oppressed inhabitants to assert their rights, and hurl the usurping tyrant from that height of power with which he seemed intoxicated.

Many and various were the questions asked both by the abbess and Adeline, the answers to which were plain and explicit; and so much was the former pleased with the adroitness her trusty intelligencer displayed in obtaining knowledge so difficult to procure, where the conduct of every person was minutely watched, that she gave him a far more superior mark of her bounty than she had been accustomed to; nor was Adeline less generous; and the grateful servant left them with an heart fully impressed with the generosity of his employers, in whose service he determined, if necessary, to pay the forfeit of his life.

The unexpected absence of Sternheim and the Chevalier D'Armfeldt from Clagenfurth, was a circumstance that gave the

Princess great concern ; for although she knew that the latter was in a great degree devoted to Albert, yet from his late conduct, and the mysterious hints he had thrown out, she flattered herself that he would not ultimately prove a serious enemy to her. In respect to Sternheim, his long-tried fidelity had determined her to place the utmost confidence in him ; and it was through his means alone that she looked forward to the happiness of once again beholding the chief tie that reconciled her to life, the young Rodolphus. His departure, therefore, from Clagenfurth at this critical period, caused her particular anxiety, as her maternal fears whispered to her that it concealed some mystery relative to her son—" Perhaps," said the trembling mother, addressing the abbess, who had been buried in deep contemplation since she had heard the intelligence brought by her menial, " Albert has at last, through the numerous emissaries employed, made some discoveries relative to the retreat of
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my dear Rodolphus, and the generous Sternheim, casually apprized of it, has hastened to save him from the impending danger: but no, that cannot be; would he not, had such been the case, have eased the heart of an afflicted mother, ere he undertook the hazardous journey? Alas! he too has deserted me, and left me solely to the protection of the abbess of St. Veil." Such was the strain in which the royal mourner bewailed the loss of those friends from whom she had so lately received consolation, and whom she now fancied had left her to her fate.

As the abbess well knew that after the first ebullitions of sorrow had spent their force, the mind of Adeline would resume that firmness which the sudden intelligence had for the moment unsettled, she attempted not to interrupt her emotions, only repeating those assurances of her protection, as far as lay in her power, which had been before so often promised; she was, however, aware of the importance at-

tached to these circumstances, and dreaded that they might prove the prelude to some disagreeable disasters; for although she had not informed Adeline of every occurrence that had come to her knowledge, lest her fears might outstrip her prudence, many minute facts were conveyed to the abbess, which sufficiently manifested that Albert and his newly-acquired confidant were employed in fabricating some plot that militated against the future peace and happiness of the Princess. She had taken, however, every precaution her limited power would admit of, to render their schemes futile; although she was sensible that should the conqueror be once persuaded to scoff at the bonds of religion, which hitherto he had held sacred, the hallowed walls of St. Veil would be but a weak rampart against the principles of licentiousness. The present conduct of Albert too justified her fears that the time was approaching when such an event would take place; for herself she had no dread, confident

dent that it was the possession of Adeline alone which was the sole object of his wishes. In this state of affairs the abbess long hesitated in what manner to act; but on mature deliberation she determined on making the Princess acquainted with the real state of the case, not only to warn her of the impending danger, but also that they might mutually consult upon the measures requisite to be adopted. Adeline shuddered at the idea; her piety firm, but unostentatious, could not conceive it possible that a Prince educated in the strict principles of a religion he had so long professed, and who indeed had more than once taken up arms to protect its votaries, would dare, even upon the most urgent occasion, to violate its sacred edicts. Alas! conscious of the innocence and purity of her own principles, she knew not the rapid progress that vice, assisted by art, makes in the heart of man, particularly of such whose power reigns predominant and untrouled. On the present occasion the only

alternative which presented itself was flight, or a dependance upon the protection which she then enjoyed, that of a respect for religion. To attempt the former, while the whole country, even to the environs of the convent itself, was filled with the spies of Albert, would not only be dangerous, but most probably futile: besides, to what asylum could she repair, alone and unprotected? as those upon whose services she could have relied in such an emergency were absent: these were weighty considerations, and such as she found it impossible to overcome. She determined, therefore, no longer to torment her mind with uncertain waverings, but placing her confidence in that Providence which she had been taught to rely upon, to remain undismayed at the post which her misfortunes had assigned her as a refuge.

Various were the pretences made by Albert, assisted by his minion Martuccio, to obtain a conference with the Princess; the former boldly demanded an audience, but his

his peremptory manner served only to render him more detestable in the eyes of Adeline, who, far from being intimidated at the threats of the haughty chief, resented the purposed insult by a firm and resolute refusal to admit him to her presence. Albert, finding that his destined victim was proof against his usurped power, determined, before he had recourse to open force, which he was fully sensible would be attended with considerable danger to himself and his adherents, to descend to artifice. The execution of this design, the outlines of which were first suggested by Martuccio, was committed to him, with a promise of a recompence, should he succeed, that gratified even that mercenary minion. As he knew the impatience of Albert, rendered doubly so by the scorn with which his demands had been treated, he delayed not an instant in entering upon the necessary measures. In order, however, to cloak his real design, he took every opportunity of expressing his admiration of the character of

the Princess of Clagenfurth, and openly blamed his chief for permitting a passion, which he could not ever expect to be returned, to gain so strong an influence over his mind, as to render him not only forgetful of the deference due to her exalted rank, but unjust to himself, and his most faithful dependants.

Martuccio soon perceived the good effects of this mode of conduct; the people in general began to entertain a better opinion of him; and blinded by his apparent generosity of sentiment towards Adeline, they trusted that the influence which he had so confessedly obtained over the mind of their chief, would be exerted in the protection, not in the oppression of his subjects.

Among the various acquirements possessed by Martuccio, the art of counterfeiting the writing of any person, so as not to be distinguished by the most accurate observer, was one which he had frequently found of the most essential service to him;
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and he determined to have recourse to it upon the present occasion, as the least dangerous method, and one, that if the deception should be detected by the scrupulous suspicions of Adeline, would not create so open a disturbance among her adherents as any thing that tended to violence. He had made himself acquainted with all the occurrences that had taken place at Clagenfurth, both previous and subsequent to the conquest of that city by Albert. The escape of Rodolphus, and the disappearance of the Chevalier Seckendorf with his wife, at that critical time, was in his opinion a sufficient evidence that it was through their means that the young Prince was saved, and that they were the companions of his exile ; but although he had endeavoured, through the communication which he studiously kept up with his numerous emissaries in foreign courts, to discover the place of their concealment, still in this instance his usual dexterity and good fortune was of no avail, as an impenetrable security baffled all his attempts.

attempts. But although he was disappointed in this particular, still he rested his whole dependance upon their names, or at least upon that of the Chevalier.

Among the various papers which had come into the possession of Martuccio, in consequence of the high situations he held in the court of Albert, were several written communications, relative to state affairs, from the Chevalier Seckendorf to the late Prince; and what he prized as of greater importance to the certain success of his scheme, there was one, which being in a female hand, he judged to be the writing of Madame Seckendorf, as it was evidently signed by her husband; and from the importance of the paper itself, he supposed that illness might have induced him to have employed his wife as his amanuensis. Whether his conjectures were just or not, he determined to trust to chance, and act upon it as a reality. A letter therefore was fabricated in the hand-writing of the Chevalier Seckendorf, to which was added
a postscript

a postscript in that of his wife: the composition, upon which more than ordinary pains was bestowed, was executed with such scrupulous exactness, as even to excite the admiration of the author himself, who felt perfectly assured of success: the only difficulty remaining to be encountered, was the manner in which this important document should be conveyed to the Princess, and in this his usual good fortune favoured him.

Notwithstanding every precaution which human prudence could adopt, Martuccio had found means to corrupt one of the residents in the convent of St. Veil, who had so ingratiated herself into the confidence of the abbess, that scarce any transaction, even of the greatest moment, passed but what came to her knowledge; and indeed so devoid was she of principle, that where she had reason to mistrust that confidence was withheld, she made no scruple of obtaining the knowledge of it by the most infamous means. This treacherous friend regularly gave Martuccio an exact account

of every circumstance in which the Princess Adeline had any concern. The visit of the monk was consequently soon made known to him, as well as the impression which the situation of the Princess seemed to have made upon his mind. On receiving this intelligence he directed his spies to inquire into his character, and particularly whether he was of that description of whom there were too many, who would sacrifice their integrity for gold. It was, however, with no small astonishment that he learnt that his virtue was incorruptible, a fact he would have been much inclined to have doubted, had not his emissaries brought so many proofs of the frequent temptations which he had resolutely withstood, that even his scepticism was obliged to give way.

A little consideration, however, convinced him that by cautious and subtile management, he might make those virtues which he himself held in the greatest derision, more serviceable to him than even the
co-operation

co-operation of a profligate or virtuous character would be. He deemed, and with justice, that a letter delivered by a man famed for integrity and unaffected piety, one too in whom the abbess herself placed the utmost confidence, would have the wished-for influence upon the mind of Adeline, and effectually lull to sleep any suspicion she might otherwise entertain of the truth of its contents.

In pursuance of his plan, he first made secret inquiries as to the person of the Chevalier Seckendorf, together with his manner and address, and having obtained the necessary intelligence, his first idea was to instruct one of his dependants in the necessary qualifications to personate him. On more mature consideration, however, he abandoned that scheme, and resolved, as the undertaking was of great magnitude, to run no risk of detection by having a confederate, but to undertake the whole himself. Albert, to whom he communicated his reasons for adopting this plan,

highly

highly approved of his resolution, and gave reiterated assurances of still superior rewards, upon the success of the expedition. All the more minute parts of the undertaking being arranged, Martuccio prepared the final stroke by writing the following letter:—

“ MOST RESPECTED PRINCESS,

“ I make no doubt but that on recognizing a signature you have so many years been unacquainted with, your maternal fears will instantly be awakened; let me then at once relieve them, by assuring you that Rodolphus is all a fond mother can wish—encreasing in virtue as in years. It is not, however, solely to ease your anxiety upon this account, or to explain my past conduct respecting the young Prince, that I now address you; I will only therefore upon this subject add, that his residence bids defiance to detection from all the emissaries of the tyrant Albert. It is
yourself,

yourself, Madame, who is the sole object of my solicitude. Long have I watched over you unseen—have viewed with a scrutinizing eye the dangers as they have increased around you; and in conjunction with Madame Seckendorf, have spent many a sleepless night in forming plans for your future security.

“ Believe, Madame, that faithful servant, who never yet deceived you, and who would most readily sacrifice his life for the welfare of yourself and family, when he asserts, that the long-dreaded crisis is rapidly approaching, when even the sacred walls of St. Veil will no longer afford an efficient protection to the Princess of Clagenfurth. Already has the usurper removed, under various pretences, to a distance far from any communication with the metropolis, all those of whose faithful attachment to the house of Clagenfurth he entertains the most distant suspicion; and even his former friend, the Chevalier D’Armfeldt, has experienced the same fate, as Albert was too
well

well convinced that no inducement he could offer, nor the recollection of past favours, would ever induce that brave, but mistaken man, to countenance a dishonourable action.

“ His present minion is of a very different description: by birth an Italian, he possesses all the wily subtilty of that nation, with an ambition boundless as the globe itself; neither does he esteem any means too desperate to arrive at the acmé of his wishes. I thought it necessary thus concisely to develop the characters of those by whom Albert is at present surrounded, and whose opinions he consults upon all momentous occasions, that you may be convinced my fears for your safety are built upon too strong a foundation to be mistaken. Yet how avoid the impending evil? Believe me, Madame, I shudder while I make the sole proposition that appears to offer future securiry; neither could any thing less than the dreadful precipice upon which you stand, induce me to hazard the attempt.

Should

Should you fall into the hands of the tyrant, the precious pledge would be rendered subservient to his ambitious views, and those maternal fears, which he well knows the extent of, would be kept in perpetual alarm, by threats respecting the safety of the young Rodolphus. One unguarded moment, (and who is there that can arrogate to themselves such a constant heroism of conduct, that will bid defiance to every assault, either of power or dissimulation?) one unguarded moment, let me repeat, may bring ruin and inevitable destruction upon the sole remaining prop of the house of Clagenfurth. Flight is the only resource that promises to protract, if not totally to avoid, the dreaded crisis; nor would your faithful servants venture to suggest such an attempt, was it not the means of almost certain safety, and which I doubt not will weigh considerably in your determination of folding that son, so long estranged from a mother's endearments, in your arms.

“ In that retreat which has for years
protected

protected his existence, guarded both by nature and art, you may smile at the impotent threats of your oppressor, and await with patience the effect of those exertions which the secret friends of the house of Clagenfurth are silently preparing, and which, your safety once ascertained, will burst with thunder upon the tyrant's head. I dare not be more explicit; neither can I think it necessary, as the Princess cannot want more assurances of the zeal of Madame Seckendorf, or myself, than what she at present possesses.

“ A fortunate chance made me acquainted with the monk who is entrusted with this letter. He is a man, I find, high in the estimation of his own community, and also in that of the abbess of St. Veil, to whom I understand he has already borne some messages from his monastery; he is, however, totally ignorant of the commission with which he is entrusted, or with the identity of the person by whom he is employed. Having met him by accident, in the course of
his

his observations, he expressed his most sincere wishes for the safety of the Princess of Clagenfurth, which, he remarked, he was fearful was endangered; and that he would willingly assist her, as far as his limited powers extended. His conversation upon the subject, which I purposely contrived to prolong, convinced me that he was sincere in his attachment; I therefore, after some preparatory caution, which I thought necessary, told him that I had a letter of the utmost consequence to the future safety of the Princess, if he could get it conveyed to her without the knowledge of any person, except the abbess. To this he cordially assented; I must again repeat that he is totally ignorant of all and every part of my scheme, which I shall now fully develop to you; and the only answer I request by the monk, is simply yes or no.

“ You know that part of the enclosure belonging to the convent which looks towards the Julian Alps, a situation the most retired, and which is seldom or ever resorted to by travellers, or persons of any
other

other description, as even the banditti who infest the other parts of the neighbourhood avoid it, as not answering their purpose; I have carefully reconnoitred the spot, and find the descent, by the means I shall previously adopt, will not be attended with the least difficulty, particularly as you will most probably be accompanied by some of the lay-sisters, or the abbess herself. Here I shall have every thing prepared; and a few hours will so far place us in safety, as to be beyond the power of Albert. At that spot Madame Seckendorf will meet us, and I trust that no impediment will then prevent our joining the young Rodolphus, who little expects the happiness his foster-parents have in store for him. On the evening of the third day from your receipt of this, I shall expect you. Be cautious, but resolute, and I prognosticate that success is certain.

“ Your faithful servant,

THE CHEVALIER SECKENDORF.”

The following lines were written to represent the hand of Madame Seckendorf—a plan deemed by the artful contrivers as a masterpiece of policy, one that could not fail to silence any doubts which the Princess might justly entertain in respect to the reality of the first information.

“ MY ADORED MISTRESS,

“ The enterprize which my husband has embarked in, while it fills my anxious bosom with alarm, affords it also a pleasure deemed lost for ever. Oh! may every good angel guard your steps to that retreat, where security from tyrannic usurpation awaits you; nor do I arrogate too much by the assertion, that the dangers you have encountered will be amply recompensed, and forgotten in the smiles and caresses of your long-estranged Rodolphus, whose graces—but I will not anticipate. I much wished to have accompanied the Chevalier to the walls of St. Veil, but

he gave me such judicious reasons to the contrary, and pointed out the danger of the enterprize being frustrated by such an attempt so clearly, that, although with great reluctance, I was obliged to acquiesce. Every moment, however, will seem an age, until I clasp to my breast a mistress I have so many years been separated from, and a Princess, who merits not only my adoration, but that of her oppressed subjects."

Martuccio, having thus completed these minor arrangements to the satisfaction both of himself and his employer, prepared to carry them into effect. The monk, whom Martuccio had sent for, and artfully moulded to his purpose, having previously disguised himself so as not to be known, was so totally ignorant of the deception he was innocently made the principal partner of, that he received the fatal packet with every demonstration of satisfaction; happy that
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it was in his power to render any service to the Princess, whose misfortunes had found the way to a heart open to the impression of pity for the unfortunate. Anxious for its delivery, he immediately proceeded to the convent, where his arrival was welcomed by the community at large, and more especially by the abbess herself, and the Princess of Clagenfurth; indeed the latter was the more rejoiced at his appearance, as, from the sudden departure both of Sternheim and of D'Armfeldt from Clagenfurth, (for, from the tenor of the conversation she had held with the latter, she flattered herself that upon any great emergency he would not entirely have abandoned her cause), she was deprived of receiving any intelligence, but such as was communicated by the cautious friend of the abbess, who, she feared, from a motive of mistaken kindness, concealed from her many facts which she would have wished to have ascertained.

The monk, from his general character,

she thought would prove a good substitute; we may recollect it was with regret that she heard of his departure on his prior visit to the convent, without her having an interview with him. Determined, however, not to be disappointed in the present instance, she was upon the point of desiring his attendance, when a message was brought to her while conversing with the abbess upon the subject, that the monk requested an audience of them, upon business of importance. Surprised at such an event, he was ordered to attend in the private apartments of the abbess, as less liable to interruption. In terms which fully explained the candour and integrity of his heart, he detailed to his auditors the previous circumstances that had taken place, and the reasons which had induced him to become the bearer of the packet, which he delivered with great humility into the hands of the Princess; adding, that as he was totally ignorant of its tenor, he would, with their permission, retire until they had examined the

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the contents, when, if his assistance or advice could in the smallest degree contribute to their satisfaction, both duty and inclination prompted him to tender his most respectful services; the monk bowed and retired, leaving both the abbess and her royal *protégée* impressed with a most favourable opinion of his principles and integrity.

No sooner were they alone than the Princess, who held the fatal packet in her hand, felt herself attacked by such an unaccountable dread, as rendered her unable to break the envelope. The abbess perceived her irresolution, and taking it from her, asked if she should examine the contents? A look of approbation supplied the place of words; and with anxiety depicted upon her countenance, she watched with narrow scrutiny the various changes which the features of her friend underwent, while looking over the unexpected communication. At length the abbess finished the perusal without interrup-

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tion; and addressing the Princess, requested her to be composed, as there was nothing in the letter but what left her a free agent, and mistress of her own actions; it was undoubtedly of the utmost importance, and required a mature and well-weighed determination: she then gave the astonished Princess the heads of the letter: the length of time, however, which was employed in the recapitulation of its contents, added to the cursory, but judicious remarks of the abbess, had produced the good effect of recovering the firmness of mind which had been decomposed by so unexpected an event; and on its final conclusion, she was enabled to enter upon the investigation of the measures it might be prudent in her to pursue.

Adeline was fully sensible of what great importance to her future happiness her present decision might prove; the various devices which the usurper had already employed to decoy her into his power, arose
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to her recollection, and fear painted to her imagination that the present lure was only a repetition of his former insidious attempts.

She requested to see the letter which the abbess had still retained. The characters appeared familiar; and her apprehension of treachery gradually gave way to a more pleasing sensation. While wavering in this uncertainty, she suddenly recollected that some letters of the Chevalier Seckendorf to the late Prince of Clagenfurth were in her possession. Conceiving that these might elucidate the identity of the present writing, she mentioned the circumstance to the abbess, who strongly recommended the comparing them together, before she came to a final decision. The Princess accordingly retired to her apartments, in order to procure the letters, which she had preserved with the greatest care, not only because they contained a correspondence of an interesting nature between the Chevalier and her adored husband, but also as they were the sole memorial of him, preserved from

the havock and devastation which had so cruelly overturned her happiness.

During her absence, the abbess, whose thoughts had been fully employed while Adeline was busily scrutinizing the letters, commanded the monk to attend her, in order, if possible, to obtain fuller information from him. To the various questions which she put to him, his answers were plain and concise, and it was evident that the assertion which he at first made of his ignorance respecting the contents of the packet he was the bearer of, was perfectly correct. His account of the first interview with the stranger who engaged him in the business, corresponded exactly with the description in the letter, and to this he voluntarily added an outline of his person, as well as he could pourtray it, as he was confessedly disguised, for the purpose, the stranger observed, of escaping the watchful eyes of the satellites belonging to Albert.

While the monk and the abbess were thus in conversation, the Princess returned, bearing

bearing several papers in her hand. The monk would again have retired, had not Adeline herself, having received the approbation of the abbess, desired him to remain, as she trusted he might be of considerable service to her, whether she ultimately decided for or against the scheme proposed. With every expression of humility and gratitude, the modest father thanked his royal mistress for the high confidence she placed in him, and most solemnly called upon his holy master to witness the sacred vow of attachment and fidelity to her cause, which, kneeling at her feet, he devoutly offered. Most sensibly affected at the feeling manner in which the monk offered his services, the Princess raised him from the humble posture which he had assumed, and assured him, if fortune permitted, of her eternal protection.

As the monk was now admitted to her confidence, the Princess gave him the packet which he had brought to peruse; and before she asked his opinion of the contents,

tents, requested him to compare the handwriting with those papers which she held in her hand. After the most minute examination, the opinion was unanimous, and thus far villany reigned triumphant. This momentous point being settled, and no doubt of the authenticity of the papers remaining, the propriety and feasibility of the attempt became the subject of consideration. Of the extremity of those dangers by which she was surrounded, the Princess was not so well acquainted as the abbess, who, being unable to point out any mode of escape from them, kindly forbore to alarm her unnecessarily, notwithstanding for some time past she had been informed of the determination of Albert to obtain possession of her person by force, if every other method proved abortive; but although she was well aware of this intention, and foresaw the probable ruin and destruction of the holy sisterhood, should she resist the peremptory mandate of the usurper to deliver the unfortunate Princess in-

to his hands, yet she nobly resolved to perish, rather than betray her sovereign, who had claimed her protection.

A long conversation ensued, chiefly between the abbess and the monk, in which every argument upon both sides was freely canvassed, although the former most carefully avoided the smallest hint of any detriment that might possibly accrue to herself from the continued residence of the Princess at the convent. Adeline listened to their remarks with the most serious attention; and perceiving that the risk of remaining in her present situation, or of acceding to the proposals of the supposed Chevalier, was nearly equal, concluded their suspense, by determining to make the attempt—"Can I," exclaimed the fair heroine, while a beam of inexpressible softness gave a peculiar kind of animation to the natural lustre of her eyes, "can I for one single instant hesitate in my choice, even were the dangers attending it more terrific than they are? No, my Rodolphus, the

sole idea of once more enfolding thee in these widowed arms, of watching over those opening graces, which like the blushing rosebud are just expanding to view, drives from my breast all feminine fears, and inspires me with a resolution that bids defiance to sinister presages; even now, my friends, my whole soul seems inspired with new vigour, and the feelings of a mother reign triumphant; let us then delay no longer, but make immediate preparations for the attempt, before the spies of the tyrant effectually prevent us. This holy man shall be my guide and protector, until the arms of Madame Seckendorf receive me in safety, and place me beyond the power of the cruel Albert."

While the Princess thus gave way to the effusions of her heart, the abbess gazed with surprise upon the sudden animation inspired by maternal affection: and although she secretly dreaded the result, yet so great was the awe impressed upon her by the enthusiastic hopes expressed by the
Princess,

Princess, that she appeared to yield to her wishes, as if impelled to it by a superior agency. Neither was the monk less affected, while in fervent accents he repeated his vows of fidelity, and his readiness to accompany her wheresoever she demanded his attendance.

As the strictest secrecy was absolutely necessary, none of the sisterhood, not even Mariana, the accustomed confidant of the abbess, was made acquainted with the intended departure of the Princess; and as little preparation was necessary, the parties more immediately interested in the undertaking were fully adequate to the task. As she was so soon to be accompanied by Madame Seckendorf, a female attendant was readily dispensed with; indeed, such an addition might have hazarded the success of the expedition, as the more numerous the cavalcade was, the more liable would their plans be subject to detection. Notwithstanding, however, all the precaution that was taken, the suspicion that some event, more
than

than ordinary, was upon the eve of taking place, was entertained by many of the sisterhood; the frequent interviews of the monk, both with the abbess and the Princess, although held under the pretence of religious duties, were a subject of various conjecture; yet so vague were these, and many of them so improbable and wide from the truth, that their multiplicity served rather to perplex than to elucidate the cause, until at length, even those most devoted to the interests, and in the pay of the usurper, (for such there were, even within those walls dedicated solely for the purposes of religion, and falsely deemed free from the vices of the world) were fearful of disclosing their sentiments upon the subject to their employer, lest, being deceived themselves, their information should prove groundless—a circumstance which experience had taught them, would irritate the jealous tyrant almost to madness. These considerations were so far of service to the Princess, as to enable her to pursue her intended

tended plan without interruption; and every preliminary being speedily adjusted, they awaited with impatience the moment of action.

As the hour approached, the Princess, although her resolution was in no degree shaken, could not survey those scenes she had been so long accustomed to, and which had proved the harbour of her safety, when her dearest ties were cruelly and irrevocably severed from her, without feeling the most poignant regret at the necessity she was under of leaving them, probably for ever. Every spot seemed to have become more dear to her; and she burst into tears when leaving the cell so long appropriated for her use. Neither was the abbess less affected; and even at the instant of the final embrace, she would have felt herself sincerely happy to have detained her, however hazardous the consequences might have been to herself.

During this affecting scene, the pious monk, conversant in the natural feelings of
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the human heart, made no vain attempts of premature consolation; he had long made nature his study, and was sensible that to oppose the first ebullitions of any passion, by whatever cause excited, whether of joy, sorrow, or anger, served as an increase, rather than a diminution of it; silently therefore he witnessed those effusions of friendship which were reciprocally expressed, while proceeding to the appointed spot of rendezvous. As they approached it, however, within a small distance, the holy father reminded them of the necessity of curbing the violence of their emotion, lest they should be detected by any of the emissaries of Albert, who were well known to be perpetually upon the watch; this consideration, added to the pious observations of their companion, checked the sorrow of the two friends; and the Princess, exerting all the energy of her soul, gave the appointed signal, which was instantly repeated from the outside of the wall.

No sooner was it ascertained that the
expected

expected Chevalier was waiting there in readiness, than Adeline, bursting from the arms of the abbess, rapidly ascended the breach, which had been secretly made for the purpose; and accompanied by the monk, waving a last adieu, in an instant was lost to the view of her disconsolate friend, who, while returning in silent sorrow to the convent, in vain endeavoured to divest her mind of the fears she could not avoid entertaining for the safety of her beloved Princess. To ease the anxiety of her mind, she had recourse to the duties of religion; and in a few hours she found her spirits, which had been greatly agitated by the preceding scenes, in a great measure composed and resigned.

The morning discovered to the community the flight of the Princess. The mystery was now fully explained; and those whose interest it would have been to have disclosed the secret, severely execrated their folly in not divining the real subject of the late transactions. Their traitorous hearts
now

now trembled with the fear of what might be the consequence of their inertness, little suspecting that their employer was himself privy to the plot. We shall leave them, however, to the terrors which their traitorous intentions most justly deserved, while we again turn the attention of our readers to our fair heroine.

The supposed Chevalier received the trembling Adeline in his arms, as she hastily descended the ruinous walls; and it was not until they had reached the firm ground that he noticed her companion; he started, and seemed much disturbed as he cast his eyes upon the monk, who with assiduous care was offering his attentions to the Princess. Some words, in a low undistinguishable voice, escaped him, when Adeline, who readily conceived the thoughts which occupied his mind, explained to him in a whisper the reasons which had urged her to accept of the pious father's company, until her arrival at the spot where she was given to understand that Madame Seckendorf

dorf was in waiting for her. Her attendant seemed for a few minutes buried deep in thought; and the suspicions of Adeline were on the point of being revived, when they were dispelled by the mild and friendly tone of the pretended Chevalier, who confessed that the appearance of a third person had at first deranged him, as a thousand ideas, prejudicial to the success of their undertaking, rushed upon his mind, and he feared that they were betrayed. But when he observed that this dreaded intruder was no other than the person whom he himself had partially entrusted, and whose general character was a sufficient assurance of his fidelity to the cause in which he supposed himself to be engaged, his fears evaporated as rapidly as they had been formed; and he complimented the Princess upon the prudence and foresight of the arrangement.

Confidence being thus restored, they contrived to make room for the holy father in the vehicle which had been brought for the

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the accommodation of Adeline. The Chevalier when seated, in answer to a question asked by the Princess, requested her to refrain at present from wishing for any information, observing, that until they were entirely free from the power and from the dominions of Albert, it would even be prudent to maintain a total silence, more particularly as the darkness of the night precluded them from observing whether any persons were upon the watch for them. This observation, natural in itself, was readily acceded to, both by the monk and the Princess, who not only admitted the propriety of it, but thanked their wily companion for the attention he paid to their safety. Their future progress was therefore passed in studied silence.

Upon the commencement of their journey, the night was calm and serene, although dark; scarcely could the tract along which they were travelling, with a speed far inferior to their wishes, be discerned; and had not occasional breaks in the forest
sometimes

sometimes admitted a small portion of light, they would have found some difficulty in tracing the proper direction, even by those marks which were erected in it for the express purpose of preventing the ignorant traveller from deviating from the tract, and thereby entangling himself in the intricacies of the surrounding wilds, where perils of every description awaited his unfortunate error. But although this silence, politic in itself, as it prevented unnecessary questions, which might possibly have puzzled even the well-informed Martuccio to have answered without raising some suspicion of his identity, was of use so far, yet by leaving the thoughts of his companions free to range through the wild and extensive labyrinth of fancy and conjecture, it roused their reflecting minds from that passive obedience they had assumed, when the prospect of future happiness first expanded to their view, and all minor considerations of prudence and caution sunk before the dazzling, but illusive splendour

splendour of joy-inspiring felicity. Frequently had Adeline, when she fancied herself unobserved, caught the looks of the supposed Chevalier, and as well as the slender light would permit her observation, she thought that his features wore an expression little consonant with the adventure he was engaged in. A shuddering sensation seized her whole frame at the idea, and had not a flow of tears given a welcome relief to her oppressed heart, she would have been totally unable to have disguised the severity of her feelings. Martuccio perceived the conflict that raged within her bosom; but as the time had not yet arrived when the ultimate discovery of the plot might with safety to its success be developed, he broke the silence which he had himself so strenuously recommended, and by assuming the most delicate respect, succeeded in obliterating all surmises which had arisen to his prejudice.

The liberty of conversation being restored, although prudence bade them con-

fine it to subjects far remote from, and totally unconnected with their own adventures, and which, if overheard, would tend rather to mislead the intruders, than afford them information, their journey became more pleasant. The monk, who had travelled over many foreign countries, and whose zeal had incited him to visit, not only the places most celebrated in his own country, but also those most esteemed abroad, had treasured up a large store of information. Nor was he deficient in those anecdotes which, when related, serve less for instruction than amusement. His auditors appeared to listen to him with pleasure; and thus engaged, they had nearly extricated themselves from the gloomy forest, through which the first part of their journey extended, when the chirping of its winged inhabitants proclaimed the approach of day. They had now travelled nearly six hours, and as it would be impossible for them to reach the place of their destination, where Adeline supposed that

Madame

Madame Seckendorf was anxiously awaiting their arrival, until the third morning, her conductor proposed that they should rest, and take some refreshment before they emerged into the open country, as less liable to observation. This was most readily agreed to by the Princess, who, fatigued both by the personal and mental exertion which she had undergone during the preceding day, felt herself inclined to court the refreshing indulgence of sleep. Notwithstanding this would in some measure delay their expedition, yet Martuccio, who, although he pretended the contrary, well knew that there was no danger in being pursued, and was willing to keep up appearances, readily consented; and by the assistance of the monk, who entered with eager avidity into any scheme which tended to the ease and accommodation of the Princess, he soon converted the vehicle in which they travelled into a temporary place of repose; and this, although destitute of splendid elegance, was, in her situation,

situation, a real luxury. Here, sheltered by the umbrageous covering of a majestic oak, the fair traveller resigned herself to the care of a superintending Providence; and a few minutes only passed ere she was consigned to a temporary oblivion of all her cares.

While the Princess was thus enjoying the refreshment so requisite to recruit her wearied spirits, and to give them new life and vigour to enable her to support herself through any further difficulties which she might encounter, her companions seated themselves at a respectful distance, but in a situation from whence they could perceive every approach to the place of their retirement. In order to beguile the time, and prevent their neglect of duty towards their charge, by giving way to the trammels of sleep, they entered into a friendly conversation. Martuccio well knew that the monk held in the monastery to which he more peculiarly belonged, a place of great responsibility, from the nature of

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which he conjectured that he was well acquainted with a knowledge of past events; and accordingly he artfully introduced the conquest of Clagenfarth by Albert, and the subsequent transactions, which he expatiated upon with great freedom and fluency of language. There was, however, a peculiarity in his manner that struck his auditor as being very singular; and he once or twice departed from his assumed character so far, as to excite some expressions of surprise; but no sooner did Martuccio perceive the effect of his incautious conduct, than with the most insinuating address, he contrived to render the observations upon the topic on which they were conversing, and which had nearly betrayed his assumed character, to militate so powerfully against the usurper, that the greatest sceptic could not fail of believing him the staunch friend of the injured Princess. He began, however, to feel the continued deception irksome to him; part of his original plan had been broken in upon by the unexpected intrusion

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sion of the monk, as it had been his intention to have made a secret of his designs no longer than a few hours after he had obtained possession of his victim. It now, however, became absolutely necessary to dismiss his troublesome companion, before Adeline could entertain any idea of the truth ; for although he was well aware that the despotic power of Albert would be exerted to screen him from any punishment, let the violence and atrocity of the measures he might find it necessary to pursue be ever so flagrant, yet the dread of the vengeance of the church, should he insult any member of it wantonly, rose paramount even to the suggestions of ambition.

During a pause in the conversation, his mind was meditating respecting the method best calculated to obtain his ends ; and his fertile invention soon struck upon a plan, which he felt confident could not fail of complete success, as he purposed to play the same game as before, and to make the

virtues of his unsuspecting associate the means of bringing his scheme to perfection; and this he determined to put in practice during the approaching day. One of those circumstances, however, which not unfrequently occur, although totally unforeseen, hastened the *denouement*, and rendered the hypocrisy, hitherto so difficult to be concealed, useless. The Princess, who, fatigued both in body and mind, had readily yielded to the impression naturally occasioned by such powerful and unaccustomed exertions, awoke from a calm and undisturbed sleep, refreshed and composed. Eager to be under the protection of Madame Seckendorf, she pressed her companions to recommence their journey. As they had hitherto travelled in darkness, the figure of the pretended Chevalier had never been noticed by her; his face indeed he had totally disguised, for which he alledged the same reason that he had previously mentioned to the monk, a fear of being recognized by any of the emissaries of Albert. He
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now, however, on the recommencement of the journey, when daylight appeared, took some additional precautions—a circumstance noticed by the Princess; and as every occurrence, even the most trifling, renewed those suspicions which, although lulled to rest, she could never entirely divest herself of, this gave her an alarm; she was accordingly upon the point of making some remark upon it, when prudence reminded her, that even should her fears be well founded, still to betray them in her present situation would perhaps only serve to hasten her destruction, as she was sensible she was too much in his power to escape, and that the assistance which the holy father might wish to afford her, would be of no avail against a far superior force.

Although the behaviour of the supposed Chevalier continued to be regulated by the same external appearance of respect and kindness, yet the idea once revived, could not be entirely appeased; and she determined, if possible, to throw herself

upon the mercy of the first travellers that Fortune might throw in her way, and claim their protection. Agitated by these sentiments, she recommenced the journey; the way led over a wide extended heath, whose barren aspect gave a gloom to Nature itself. At the extremity of it, though far distant, appeared the Julian Alps, whose summits apparently lost in the clouds seemed to forbid the approach of the daring and adventurous travellers. "It is among yon mountains," said her treacherous guide, "that the Princess of Clagenfurth will once more enjoy the happiness of life; at their base the protectress of your beloved Rodolphus awaits, counting the moments that will bring his respected mother to share with her both the care and the satisfaction of his future education. Oh! with what joy shall I resign you to the arms of those whose love will so amply recompense you for past sorrows! while your grateful servants, viewing with unutterable satisfaction the good fortune which they have been enabled

enabled to attain for you, will find in the contemplation of your joys their own remuneration."

It was with speeches similar to these that Martuccio endeavoured to beguile his credulous victim, whose manners he had most scrutinizingly, but cautiously, observed; and he fancied, that notwithstanding her apparent ease, a mistrust of his sincerity had found a passage to her heart; so difficult is it to conceal our feelings from those who are materially interested in detecting their course.

While the party thus proceeded, now become mutually suspicious of each other, the morning, which had hitherto been calm and serene, promised a sad reverse; the winds began to sound in hollow cadence through the forest, which they had so lately quitted, while the clouds, rising from the south in dark tremendous columns, indicated an approaching tempest. They were advanced a considerable distance on the heath; no friendly cottage gratified their

inquiring eyes, which might afford a temporary shelter from the approaching hurricane. They stopped in order to hold a consultation as to the measures it would be most prudent to pursue, whether to return to the forest they had quitted, or persevere in their endeavours to reach the extremity of the heath. While they were thus doubtful, Martuccio, who thought the moment was arrived when he could shake off his companion without suspicion, appeared suddenly to recollect that a monastery was situated to the left of the forest, and proposed that they should regain the shelter of the latter, while the monk, whose function would obtain him a ready admittance, should make the best of his way to it, and prepare the superior for their appearance. He observed, that such a measure would cause but a trifling delay, as the place he mentioned was but a small deviation from the road to the rendezvous at which Madame Seckendorf had been appointed to meet them, who, although she would doubtless

less be uneasy at the procrastination of their hazardous journey, would naturally account for it by the uncertainty of the stoppages they might meet with. The monk, totally unsuspecting of the integrity of his companion, verified his assertion, and spoke highly of the virtues and excellencies of the superior, whom he professed himself to be well acquainted with, and was happy he should renew it, by recommending so august a personage to his attention. Martuccio scowled at him from under his cloak, with a look of the most inveterate malice, although unperceived by the holy father. His behaviour, however, did not escape the observation of the Princess, whose fears having been once alarmed, could not so easily be soothed to rest; and although she for a moment felt happy, that by acquiescing in the proposal, she might possibly obtain the assistance of the superior through the representation of the friendly monk, yet a sentiment undefinable even to herself prompted her to object to it, observ-

ing in a mild, yet firm manner, that as they had agreed the monastery was not at a very great distance, it would be most prudent and comfortable for her to proceed thither immediately, even should the weather prove more tempestuous than it promised to be; as should it be as violent as they seemed to apprehend, the slender protection which the umbrageous foliage of the adjacent forest could afford during the absence of the monk, would be of no material avail against its fury; and she was well assured she ran more risks of her life by taking that advice, than by hastening forward at all hazards. While making these observations, her looks wore an impression which convinced Martuccio he was suspected. The storm began to encrease; loud howled the discordant blast, while the tremulous flash of the vivid lightning darted its threatening points all around them: yet amid this concussion of nature, every trait of disappointment and revenge characterized the gloomy physiognomy of the baffled enterprizer. He was
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now sensible that nothing less than absolute force would avail; but although he despised the weak assistance which the monk could render, and indeed he had determined to sacrifice him on the spot, if rendered desperate, yet he was at a loss, without taking the latter remedy immediately, in what manner to escape with the Princess, who would naturally make every exertion her forlorn situation would admit of, as soon as the mask was totally withdrawn. It seemed indeed as if Providence itself had taken the unfortunate Adeline into its protection, by multiplying the difficulties which surrounded him; for while his thoughts rapidly crossed each other in dreadful uncertainty which way to fix, a flash of lightning, more potent than the preceding, struck the vehicle, under whose slender covering the Princess had taken shelter, and the poor solitary animal, by whose exertions they had hitherto travelled so far, became a lifeless corpse. This untoward and unexpected event startled even the arch-plotter

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himself;

himself; and for a few moments he stood stupified with surprise, heedless of the thunder, which rolling over his head in volleys, echoed with tremendous effect among the distant mountains, or of that lightning, the direful consequences of which lay before him. A violent scream recalled both his and the monk's attention, (the latter indeed had been absorbed in prayer), and they beheld the wretched Adeline, who had thrown herself from the carriage, stretched lifeless upon the ground. His first impulse was to replace, by the assistance of the monk, his insensible victim in the carriage, as she would at least be partially sheltered from those falling torrents, which had almost completely drenched her apparel. Here his exertions ended; and his guilty conscience, partially awakened by the scene before him, seemed to oppress him with a weight that baffled his resolution. Wildly he stared around him, as if to catch the glimpse of some passing traveller, from whom he could demand assistance; and most readily

readily would he at that moment have forgone the completion of his villany, could he have seen the Princess in a place of safety. Such is the state of those who embark in wickedness; while prosperity shines upon their nefarious transactions, the current of their blood runs cool and unembarrassed, and the success which they meet with lulls their conscience to sleep; but on a reverse of fortune, pusillanimity, the most abject, succeeds to triumphant exultation; and the wretch, who but the instant before held the world at defiance, and despised the assistance of the most powerful, will hail with rapture the care and the soothings of a poor, but virtuous mendicant. The truth of this observation was amply elucidated by the present feelings of Martuccio. The treachery he had been guilty of towards a virtuous and unoffending female struck him with redoubled force, as he contemplated the deathlike aspect of the unfortunate Princess; he looked round with a gloomy despair; and in the paroxysm

ysm of his distress, mentally resolved, should Providence restore her to her senses, to confess his imposition, and deserve her forgiveness, by placing her in a situation where the utmost power of Albert could neither molest or injure her. Alas! too transient was this return of virtue; a deep sigh arrested his attention; it came from the bosom of his victim; at that instant she opened her languid eyes, and fixed them momentarily upon the monk; but perceiving the gaze of his companion intently scrutinizing her countenance, she closed them immediately, and appeared to relapse into a state of insensibility. The situation of Martuccio now became more desperate, though the mitigation of the tempest was some alleviation, and the dispersion of the distant clouds announced the approaching serenity of the late troubled atmosphere.

During the violence of his feelings, the disguise which he had assumed, and which he had hitherto preserved with the most scrupulous attention, was no longer
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thought upon ; and had the Princess been able to have distinguished, the imposition would have been instantly detected : of this, however, she was destined to be ignorant some little time longer. There is no doubt but that the monk had his suspicions ; yet perfectly sensible that by avowing them he might endanger his own safety, without benefiting the Princess in the smallest degree, he abstained from disclosing them ; at the same time, he determined that no pretence, however plausible, should make him desert her. It became necessary that something should instantly be determined upon ; the Princess was evidently alive, but if assistance was not immediately procured, she must necessarily sink under the perils of her situation. At length they agreed to carry her between them to the monastery before mentioned ; but scarcely had they come to this resolution, when Martuccio, casting his eyes over the wide extended heath, perceived the approach of two persons ; the distance they

they were as yet at, prevented him from discerning whether they were travellers, or the ordinary peasantry of the country. The procuring assistance from them was the impulse of the moment ; but as his virtuous resolutions were nearly all dissipated, his recollection whispered to him the purport for which he was there, and the probability that these people might make inquiries which would puzzle him to answer. They might also be some of the banditti who were known to inhabit the mountains, and frequently descended into the plains beneath, either to procure information or plunder. It was also evident that the intruders had observed them, and that deviating from the direct road, they were rapidly advancing towards them. Martuccio now felt that no further time was to be lost to prevent detection. He accordingly urged the monk to take up the lifeless burden, and to proceed as fast as possible ; to this, however, the pious father, who had not only observed the approaching assistance, but

but also the perturbation of his companion, which further confirmed his suspicion that all was not right, ventured to object, stating, that as help was near at hand, the procrastination would be more beneficial than otherwise. The storm, so ill concealed, now burst forth from the bosom of the hypocrite, and in language the most peremptory and insulting, he commanded him to obey. A mild, yet firm refusal was returned to his passionate expressions; and he was proceeding to enforce his reasons by such arguments as sense and religion dictated, when looking round, Martuccio perceived that the strangers were advancing rapidly, and that one moment only was between him and destruction: yet he could not resolve to abandon Adeline, for whose sake he had already ran such hazards; one desperate effort might still make him master of her fate. At that instant vice triumphed; and the unsuspecting father, who was watching with eager anxiety the rapid footsteps of those from whom he hoped to procure

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procure assistance, received a blow from the dagger of his companion, which laid him senseless by the still inanimate Princess. Hastily snatching up the latter in his nervous arms, which seemed to have gained an Herculean force upon the occasion, the murderer fled with all expedition towards the forest which they had last quitted, as he made no doubt that could he once enter it, he should be secure from all researches that could be made after him. Fate ordained he should be successful; and so rapidly had he retreated, that he could perceive the intruders had but just arrived where he had left the monk weltering in his blood, as he entered the borders of an immense umbrageous tract, the intricacies of which he was better acquainted with than he had hitherto confessed even to Albert himself.

The hearts of the strangers, when they reached the spot where the monk lay weltering in his blood, and to all appearance lifeless, were affected by more than common

mon sensations; they had at a distance perceived an unusual disturbance; but were far from imagining such a scene of atrocity as lay before them, which, should they ever be able to investigate, they were persuaded would disclose crimes of a deeper dye: their first concern was to examine the body; accordingly raising it in their arms, they perceived with the utmost satisfaction that life was not quite extinct. One of them, who was well skilled in surgery, and the nature of wounds, soon found that the dagger had missed the vital parts; yet so great had been the effusion of blood, that life still appeared as on a balance. Some applications, however, which they fortunately had with them, joined to a cordial of peculiar efficacy, effected a recovery of sense, sooner than they had reason to expect. The holy father opened his languid eyes, and casting them upon his present companions, perceived that he was indebted for his deliverance from death to their compassionate assistance. He attempted
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to thank them by words ; but although extreme weakness prevented this exertion, his looks most amply conveyed his meaning. The strangers saw his inability to converse, and although they were eager to obtain information by what accident he had been brought into so perilous a condition, as also who the persons were that had so hastily and abruptly left him, yet they restrained their curiosity, lest they should endanger his convalescence by too great an exertion. It became, however, necessary, at all events, to convey the invalid to some place where he might procure rest, and remain undisturbed. The monastery before mentioned was well known to one of the travellers, and they determined upon endeavouring to reach it : to walk so far was impossible. Desperate situations suggest measures which, calmly considered, would be deemed the height of folly to attempt. The carriage in which Adeline had been conveyed away stood beside them ; this, by mere dint of strength, they converted

converted into a sledge, disburthening it of all its most unweildy parts, leaving only the wheels, and a plank sufficient for the wounded monk to lay upon. The delay which this operation necessarily occasioned, was fortunately rather of service to the invalid than otherwise; the blood had been staunched, and the cordial which had been given to him had considerably revived his sinking frame, and enabled him to bear the uncomfortableness of his conveyance much better than he might have done, had he been prematurely hurried. With great toil and perseverance, the friendly strangers at length accomplished their benevolent intentions; and although much exhausted, the monk arrived in safety at the wished-for asylum. Astonishment sat upon the countenances of its pious inhabitants at such an unusual appearance; and the abbot, a man of superior sanctity, and whose whole form instantly struck the beholder with a religious awe and reverence, looked with an inquiring eye upon the intruders.

intruders. The one who seemed to take the lead of his companion in conversation understood his meaning, and requesting a few moments in private, spoke to him in a tone so low as not to be overheard by the inferior brothers. The countenance of the superior, where sternness appeared to reign predominant, immediately relaxed; and commanding the physician of the monastery to pay every attention to the wounded monk, he invited the strangers to a repast in the refectory. Here leaving this benevolent society in the exercise of the noblest duties of humanity and hospitality, and also the fate of the Princess Adeline in a state of uncertainty, we must recall the attention of our readers to that period when Berthold, attended by Sternheim, left the retreat of the Count Von Werdenberg, to investigate the mysterious departure of Matilda from the protecting care of the Abbess of St. Pierre.

The two friends proceeded for some time in a straight direction for the convent

of St. Pierre ; but after travelling several miles, Berthold proposed turning to the left, observing that it would not materially lengthen their journey, and they should be assured of better accommodations. As Sternheim was convinced that his companion was much better acquainted with every road than he could possibly be, every direction as to their procedure was readily conceded to him. They were well armed ; and Sternheim suspected, what indeed was really the case, that during the delay which Berthold had told the Count Von Werdenberg was necessary before he could undertake the journey, the former had, by the assistance of the latter, and his faithful servant Hassan, with whom he had observed him to be in frequent converse, given intelligence to those under his command, which was connected with their present expedition ; and although, upon any other occasion, he might have suspected the integrity of a character such as he apparently had committed himself to, yet the esteem in which that character was so undeniably held

held by the Count Von Werdenberg, banished every symptom of mistrust.

Indeed, from the first interview with Berthold, Sternheim conceived that he had some prior knowledge of him; but the idea was so vague, and the suspicion which he entertained so void of probability, that he almost dismissed the thought as soon as formed. At times he even doubted that he was the commander of the men who were denominated banditti; who then were those over whom he possessed so absolute a power? The question puzzled him; but as neither Berthold himself, or the Count Von Werdenberg, thought it prudent to be more explicit, he resolved to be satisfied with the reflection that he was esteemed by both, who doubtless had most satisfactory reasons for their reserve.

The conversation during their travelling naturally turned upon the business they were proceeding to investigate; and although they could not devise the means by which he had obtained the knowledge
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of Matilda's retirement; yet they doubted not but that Albert was the perpetrator of the outrage—"However," said Berthold, "I shall probably be better informed before we reach the convent."

"By what means," cried Sternheim, in some astonishment, "since no one is acquainted with our proceedings?"

Berthold smiled—"My friend," said he, "I am sorry that circumstances, and the express desire of the Count Von Werdenberg, oblige me to make you only half a confidant. I well knew your character before we met at the hermitage—knew it to be faithful to your late Prince, and no less so to his survivors." Here Berthold appeared much affected, a circumstance which did not escape the attentive observation of his auditor, and awakened those suspicions which he had before entertained; he, however, remained silent; and Berthold speedily recovering himself, added—"Without the consent of the Count, as I before observed, I cannot at present be

more explicit; suffice it to observe, that my will, over those brave men who execute my orders, is absolute. But to our present purpose:—my scouts are now out in every direction; nor is there a Prince in the whole empire in whose dominions I have not agents ready either to act upon the spot, or to send intelligence to me. At this moment, several of the most acute and most confidential are spies upon Albert, whose intentions I have long known; and I much fear that the fate of the Princess Adeline is near at hand. Be not alarmed,” continued Berthold, perceiving Sternheim much agitated, “I trust I shall be successful in rescuing her from the dangers by which she is surrounded, as I have already dispatched some of my scouts to the Chevalier D’Armfeldt, whose affection for an unworthy master is deservedly upon the wane; and the intelligence he will receive from me, will, I doubt not, force him to break those bonds of friendship asunder, nearly worn out by repeated insults, artfully

fully disguised under the semblance of honourable employment. The hearts of the soldiers are already his, and they only await his commands to revenge their insulted country."

Sternheim listened to this unexpected intelligence with visible impatience—"Why," exclaimed he, "did you not inform the Count Von Werdenberg and the gallant Theodore of a matter of such importance to their interests? Would not the arm of the latter be endowed with tenfold prowess, when avenging the cause of a beloved sister, and the murdered parent of his destined bride? or would not the counsels of the Count Von Werdenberg, whose name alone strikes terror to his foes, be of a still more essential service?"

Sternheim was proceeding in a rapid manner, when Berthold taking him by the hand, which he pressed with the tenderest friendship, observed—"You may now perceive, my dear Sternheim, by yourself, how the mind of man is almost instantaneously

neously subject to first ideas, which are too frequently acted upon, without judging whether the conclusions to be drawn from them are just or otherwise, and we too often act from the impulse of the moment, while the judgment sleeps. Honoured, as I have been for years, by the friendship of the Count Von Werdenberg, I should ill deserve the entire confidence he reposes in me, was I not to consult him in every minutia relative to so momentous a concern. Let this assurance reinstate me in your good opinion, that every event of our lives are mutually known to each other. It was his express wish that Theodore should be kept in ignorance that such a scheme was in agitation, as he dreaded lest the impetuosity of youth, which his late reception at the court of Clagenfurth has not tended to mitigate, should overwhelm his prudence, and make a premature disclosure of our plans, before they are ready to be put into practice. A fear also, lest you might unintentionally drop some hint of it,

it, while in daily converse with him, was the objection the Count had to its being imparted to you; but I was requested to make the earliest communication of it, when entered upon our journey; and long before our return to the secluded retreat, I trust different scenes will occupy our attention, and that the legal heir to the principality of Clagenfurth will no longer live concealed, but be brought back in triumph to his admiring subjects."

Berthold ceased; and Sternheim, who was more than ever astonished at what had been disclosed to him, determined to restrain his curiosity, until such time as a proper opportunity offered, and it was agreeable to the former to elucidate what appeared extraordinary, by the relation of his history. The respect they at first sight entertained for each other seemed hourly to encrease; great minds, however different their stations of life, easily assimilate, and a few slight blemishes are overpowered by the resplendency of real virtues;

may, sometimes these very blemishes serve to give additional force to the character in which they are observed. Such was the light in which Sternheim considered his companion.

According to the direction of Berthold, they had, as before observed, deviated from the usual tract, and on the first night, fearless of danger, they became the tenants of a shady grove. The moon shone bright, nor was a sound heard, except the notes of the plaintive nightingale, whose melodious strains lulled their wearied minds to rest. Awaking at the first blush of day, they renovated their spirits, by partaking of the refreshment which they had prudently brought with them, as Berthold was aware that they should not be able to procure any until the second noon, by which time he trusted to reach a place of rendezvous, well known and frequently visited by him. Having finished their frugal, but invigorating repast, they pursued their course in the same direction, without meeting with
any

any occurrence to attract their attention, until they arrived upon the wild heath over which the traitor Martuccio was conveying the Princess Adeline. Immediately upon their entrance on it, they discerned the group at a distance, but naturally concluding that they were travellers, quietly pursuing their journey, they took no particular notice of them. The road, however, that Berthold and his companion were travelling, would necessarily oblige them to pass each other at no great distance ; the rain, as before observed, began to fall in torrents ; and as they could easily perceive that the party, whoever they were, were in distress, their natural humanity instantly prompted them to hasten to their assistance. The consequence of this benevolent intention needs not be repeated. Possessed of unbounded resources in his own mind, even upon the most hazardous occasions, Berthold, we have seen, obtained an asylum for the wounded monk ; and having consigned the invalid to such

care as he was satisfied would be tendered with the utmost sincerity, he began to be impatient to develop the past scenes. He knew that his presence was wanted elsewhere ; but still he could not reconcile it to himself to leave the monastery, until he had procured an interview with the invalid ; this, however, the attending physician told him was impossible to be effected immediately ; for, he observed, that although the dagger had missed a vital part, yet it had penetrated so near to one of the principal vessels, as to endanger its bursting, by any over exertion during his imbecile state. This intelligence much perplexed him ; he wished to depart, but seemed restrained by a superior agency. An accidental circumstance at length determined him : having inquired, as was his usual custom of a morning, whether the invalid had enjoyed a favourable night, the monk, whose duty it was to attend him, informed him that his sleep seemed to have been more undisturbed ; but that two or three times he had
repeated,

repeated, in so low a voice as scarcely to be heard, "*Alas! unhappy, deceived Adeline!*" Berthold started; while Sternheim, who happened at that instant to be with him, could hardly support himself; a faint sickness seized his manly heart, and he sunk almost insensible upon the couch beside him. The monk, though surprised that the words which he had repeated should have produced such an effect, upon a man whose aspect appeared to denote a firmness, rather than an imbecility of mind, speedily administered a cordial, which soon produced the intended effect; and Sternheim, ashamed of the weakness he had been betrayed into, and at the same time dreading the scrutinizing observation of the monk, whose eyes had been fixed upon him with a meaning he could not fathom, apologized for the trouble he had occasioned, attributing it to a return of a disorder, which he was subject to whenever his mind or body had been engaged in services more laborious than usual. Whether his

auditor gave credit to his excuse, could not be perceived. Mutual civilities passed; and the monk left the two friends to indulge their own observations.

Berthold, who had kept a strict silence, was the first to break it—"Something," said he, "more than ordinary has taken place; Albert, I fear, alarmed by the appearance of Theodore at his court, and at the firm courageous conduct he displayed while there, has forestalled even his own designs, and precipitated himself into a gulph, which, although it may create present uneasiness, will, I trust, eventually overwhelm him with destruction. By some unaccountable means, I doubt not but that he has obtained possession of the Princess; it is only a link of the same chain by which he was in hopes of ensnaring Matilda, who would doubtless have shared the same fate, had not fortune brought me to her rescue. Alas! who is there to protect the unfortunate Adeline? But regret is useless; we must act, and that instantly——And now I

recollect, there appeared to be two more persons in company with the monk: Heavens! should it have been Adeline, in the power of one of the minions of Albert! my very blood chills at the idea; could the monk whom we relieved be a partaker in the deception? If so, great indeed must be his penance, to wash away the atrocity of his crimes. I cannot, however, suffer such a suggestion to dwell upon my mind; his countenance, although disfigured by the pangs of death, still retained a nobleness of character, that would spurn at a disgraceful action. I am determined, however, to be satisfied, and that instantly; minor considerations must give way to those of consequence, which involve the lives not of an individual only, but of a whole nation."

Sternheim listened with the greatest attention; but taking advantage of a pause, he suggested whether it would not be proper to consult the abbot upon the occasion; as, if he was inclined to befriend

their cause, he might be of the most essential service to it, particularly in the emergencies of the present moment.

Berthold hesitated a few minutes; upon reflection, he allowed that the advice was of great weight; and that present success would far counterbalance any fancied injury which their cause might receive from intrusting him—"Besides," continued he, I have every reason to believe, when he knows who I am, that all scruples, if he had any, would instantly vanish, and himself, together with his whole community, would be at our entire devotion. But no time is to be lost; I will instantly commence the experiment; in the meantime, your employment must be to get every thing ready, that, if necessary, we may leave the monastery at a moment's warning." With mutual expressions of esteem for each other, they then separated, each to their different avocations.

Although the mind of Sternheim was racked with torturing suspense respecting the

the exclamation uttered by the invalid, still it found leisure to admire the great power which his brave companion appeared to possess over individuals of all ranks, and -arguing on the present by the past, his hopes revived, and he flattered himself that he should again experience the heartfelt felicity of seeing the family of his late beloved master firmly reinstated in their just possessions.

Berthold, as he went, in order to obtain an audience of the abbot, met him coming out of the apartment into which the wounded monk had been removed, as more commodious. Both seemed anxious to address each other, and the former could not avoid observing, that the countenance of the abbot bore strong marks of indignation. As if by mutual consent, they repaired to the suite of rooms peculiarly appropriated to the superior, which were sacred from interruption, not one of the brotherhood daring to intrude, except upon the most urgent and special business, and

and even then, not without an appropriate signal: when seated, each seemed at a loss how to begin the conversation; and for some time a total silence reigned, until the abbot first breaking it, requested to know whether, when he met him at the door of the invalid, he was going to pay a visit there, or if he had intended to have honoured himself with a visit? Berthold confessed that the latter was his primary object, as his visit to the wounded monk would depend upon the advice which he might receive from him, upon a subject most interesting to all parties concerned. "It seems," cried the abbot, hastily interrupting Berthold, and crossing himself with great devotion, "as if a superior agency was about to discover crimes of the deepest dye. I have just left the invalid; some expressions, which I had been informed had escaped him, either in his sleep, or rather I should suppose upon a partial return of sense, alarmed me, and I esteemed it my duty to investigate, if possible, the meaning

meaning of them, more especially as from the unconnected manner in which they were related to me, they seemed to proceed from the stings of a guilty conscience."

"Heavens!" exclaimed Berthold, "could villany be concealed under so sacred an appearance?"

"Your exclamation does you honour," returned the abbot; "and I am happy to inform you that my suspicions were unjust; and that the holy father, whose character I have long been acquainted with, but of whose person I was ignorant, has been the victim of those virtues which have raised him in the estimation of his own community, and of the world at large——"

"Pardon me for interrupting you," cried Berthold; "but my mind is on the rack. Is the Princess of Clagenfurth concerned in your relation?"

"She is," replied the abbot, with a sigh.

The eyes of Berthold shot fire; his whole frame seemed agitated with feelings almost too powerful to undergo; and he uttered the
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the most terrible threats of vengeance upon her persecutors.

The abbot, who perceived the effect which his intelligence had caused, suffered the first effusions of rage to exhaust itself, without endeavouring to sooth them, until perceiving him become rather more calm, he, in temperate, though firm language, reminded him before whom he was uttering threats, so contrary to the mild precepts of that religion which they all, he hoped, professed.

Berthold confessed his impropriety, and readily made a suitable apology, which was as readily admitted. The abbot then proceeded to relate the circumstances of the deception practised upon the Princess of Clagenfurth, and the result, as detailed to him by the monk, to which Berthold listened with peculiar attention. At the conclusion, the latter asked whether the monk knew who it was that personated the Chevalier Seckendorf? To this question the abbot returned a negative; neither could he

he give any further information upon the subject, as by the violence of the blow, the monk immediately became insensible, and was totally ignorant as to the direction in which the Princess was forced off, although he conjectured it must be into the adjacent forest, its intricacies affording the most secure shelter. After hearing all these circumstances, and as the abbot informed him that the monk was much exhausted by the exertions which he had made in giving this information, Berthold waved the paying him a visit in his apartments.

During the foregoing conversation, the abbot had frequently looked at Berthold with peculiar attention, as if he seemed to recall some long-lost friend to his recollection ; but the idea was so vague and inconclusive, as to resemble those illusive phantoms which float upon the imagination, while under the impulse of half-formed dreams, more than reality. This scrutiny did not, however, escape the notice of the latter, who, advancing towards the venerable

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able superior, and affectionately taking his hand, said, with a smile—"Do you then recognize me as a friend?" He was proceeding; but perceiving the abbot excessively agitated, and fearful that he might, in the first ebullitions of surprise, disclose more than was as yet prudent to be made known, he added, "If you still continue to hold me dear, let not a word escape, even that you have previously known me. My reasons are such as I flatter myself you will acquiesce in, when I inform you that Henry Count Von Werdenberg, who honours me with his friendship, enjoins this secrecy."

The abbot, who had not recovered his first astonishment, was still more surprised when he heard the name of Henry Count Von Werdenberg, as he, together with the rest of the world, the emperor excepted, who had religiously kept the trust reposed in him, had long consigned that hero to the grave. To hear, therefore, of his being alive, and at no great distance from him,

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was an event full as wonderful as the appearance of the person who was then addressing him. To his request, however, he gave a ready and friendly acquiescence, although he could not resist from inquiring where he had concealed himself so long?

Berthold, with a smile, replied—"You will perhaps recall that friendship I have long known the value of, when I inform you that both yourself and your whole society are indebted to my exertions."

"How!" cried the abbot, in amaze, "am I to withdraw my friendship for having received kindness from you, though I own myself ignorant of the obligation?"

"Do you recollect," said Berthold, "some few years ago, that a body of soldiers belonging to a neighbouring potentate, who scrupled not to enrich himself by any means, however atrocious, suddenly invaded your peaceful dwellings, and were upon the point of getting possession, not only of your treasures, but of your persons also, when an armed force unexpectedly

edly rushed upon them, and not only saved both the lives and property of the society, but revenged the daring sacrilege by a total slaughter?"

"Too well," cried the abbot, "do I remember that terrible day: we had given up ourselves for lost, as I was well acquainted with the Prince's personal enmity towards myself; and am convinced that it was principally that circumstance which made him set every thing sacred at defiance. No, that event can never be forgotten, as a solemn jubilee has ever since been constantly held upon the anniversary of our deliverance, to render thanks to the Supreme Being for sending us such un-hoped-for succour in the time of need; indeed, the act itself seemed the interposition of Heaven. Conceive, however, my astonishment, when upon inquiry, I found that our preservers were a band of banditti from the mountains, who were supposed to have been returning from some expedition of their own. Their conduct, however, proved

proved them in that instance to be men of real honour, for not all my persuasions could make them receive any recompence for the service which they had afforded us. For their leader, for such I supposed him to be, by the implicit obedience paid to him, I confess I felt an affection, the nature of which I could scarcely define. It was in vain, however, I sought to thank him, as he constantly avoided me. Pleased with his generous conduct, I made it my business to inquire more particularly concerning him, but to no purpose; all the intelligence I could gain was, that since he had assumed the command of this troop, they had become the protectors, instead of the terror and plunderers of the country; and I think that man, whoever he is, who has civilized a set of barbarians, and made them serviceable to society, deserves a greater reward, than the one who, sitting at the helm of power, sees aggression flourish, when he possesses the most ample means of preventing it. You smile! gracious Powers!

Powers! is it possible? Yes, that look confirms it; and have I the happiness of embracing a long-lost friend in the person of our generous preserver?" exclaimed the abbot, who forgetting, in the impulse of the moment, the dignity of his high station, threw himself into the arms of Berthold. "This is the climax of astonishment; how will our whole community adore the man, so long the admiration of all!"

"My friend," interrupted Berthold, "remember that for the present this discovery must remain inviolably sacred in your own breast, nor must I be known to any one, but by my assumed name of Berthold; any further disclosure would most probably effectually prevent my taking the necessary steps for the rescue of Adeline, and the punishment of the usurper Albert; for well I know that it is under his sanction the violence has been committed. Besides, matters of still higher moment render further concealment necessary; for not even my companion knows me for any other person

person than Berthold, the reputed captain of the banditti, a title I glory in. Some other time you shall hear the circumstances which placed me in the situation ; and I will venture to assert, that notwithstanding prejudice itself should attempt to blame, that the enlightened Abbot of Grieffenberg will not only applaud, but freely give his absolution."

"At least," cried the abbot, with a smile, "his friendship will strongly incline to the merciful side, and prejudice the opposing arguments of severity sufficiently in your favour, to secure an acquittal in his heart. But come, it is necessary you should proceed to action ; and as I fear the removal of the monk from this monastery will be attended with much inconvenience to him, he shall be perfectly welcome to remain here as long as he chuses, and I will immediately send to his own superior, and account for his absence."

Berthold appeared thoughtful at this proposition ; an idea floated in his imagination
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that he had heard something relative to that superior, which denoted him the subservient friend of Albert; but what the subject was, he could not immediately call to his recollection. He requested, however, the abbot to defer his intention, until he had consulted his companion Sternheim; at the same time he made suitable acknowledgments for his kindness, which, he observed, he would, with his permission, so far profit by, as to accept of the services of two of the inferior brotherhood, in whom confidence could be placed, in order to send information of the events which had happened to the Count Von Werdenberg; and also to convey some directions to the nearest rendezvous of his own people, which was at no great distance; as by the orders which he had conveyed to them previous to his accompanying Sternheim, he knew they were awaiting his further instructions.

The abbot readily acquiesced in his desires, as he was convinced his plans, though
widely

widely extended, were so judiciously formed, and so correctly acted upon; as seldom to fail in the execution. They separated, therefore, for the present, the one to give instructions to those who were to be honoured with the trust, the other to consult with his associate what further measures it would be necessary to pursue.

Berthold found Sternheim anxiously awaiting the event of his conversation with the superior; nor did the latter wonder, after what had already passed, at the submissive and friendly conduct of the abbot. The question relative to the superior of the monastery in which the wounded monk commonly resided, Sternheim answered by relating the transactions which took place there, when Theodore and himself first sought its shelter. This was a decisive negative to the proposition of sending any intelligence to that quarter.

It now became the subject of their thoughts what steps they should first take, whether to remain passive, until the return

of the respective messengers, or whether they should immediately begin their search after the Princess Adeline; for every doubt of her identity was removed by the intelligence obtained from the monk. It must be observed that they had, upon the first discovery, discarded the idea of pursuing their original intention of visiting the convent of St. Pierre; for being perfectly convinced that both acts of atrocity proceeded from the same source, and as the one had been most fortunately defeated, and the object of it in perfect security, they deemed it best to confine their exertions to the cause of the Princess; and after freely canvassing the subject, and setting it in every point of view, they came to the resolution of remaining at the monastery, until they had obtained the intelligence which they had employed their messengers to procure.

The situation of the Princess Adeline was most critical; but Berthold wisely judged, that if the villain who was employed

ployed found a pursuit discontinued, he would most probably be contented with executing his original design, without further violence or injury; whereas, on the contrary, disappointment, and the certainty of his own life being the sacrifice of his conduct, might induce a heart callous to every feeling of humanity effectually to prevent the success of his pursuers, by resorting to the most desperate means; and the life of his innocent victim might possibly prove the ultimate resource of his revenge, upon the detection of his imposition. Influenced by these ideas, Berthold and Sternheim remained in the monastery; and the abbot, to whom they had confided their reasons for their apparent inactivity under the existing circumstances, added his cordial approbation of their plan, and again repeated his offers of every assistance it was in his power to grant.

Many of the incidents relative to Berthold surprised the venerable superior; but confiding in his former well-known

sense of honour, added to that of the Count Von Werdenberg, he felt convinced that, even should some actions be proved not perfectly correct, according to rigid severity, yet that the impulse of the most urgent necessity, which rose superior to the nicer points of propriety, alone occasioned a partial deviation from it; thus, he generously considered it, not as the act of the heart, which still remained untainted, but of some sudden and incontrollable impulse, too powerful for the imperfect frame of man to endure.

While the friends of the Princess of Clagenfurth were thus consulting, not only upon the means of rescuing her from her present duress, but also of taking a signal revenge for the insult which the different branches of her family received in the forced detention of her person, she was suffering under every torture of mind that human nature could endure. When she had recovered her sensibility, which was not until Martuccio had conveyed her
deep

deep into the labyrinth of the forest, she looked around with unfeigned astonishment: some faint recollection of the past crossed her imagination; but so bewildered were her ideas, that it seemed but as the vision of the brain. Happening to catch the eye of her companion, who, having laid her upon a bank, free from the under-wood and brambles, was most anxiously awaiting her returning sense, in order to proceed upon his intended plan, for having, as he conceived, escaped the threatened danger of detection, he had no intention of relinquishing it, she shuddered with horror at the expression visible in it; and although her spirit revolted at the idea of entering into any conversation with her betrayer, yet finding her mental powers beginning to regain that strength of which the unexpected act of Martuccio towards the monk had only caused a temporary relaxation, but not entirely subdued, she asked him by what right he had dared to violate the asylum which she had chosen, and by a stratagem

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tagem as mean as cruel, had deprived her of the consolation of those few friends which her unhappy fate had left her?

Martuccio was struck dumb at the cool, yet dignified manner in which she addressed him; he had expected a torrent of reproaches, and those violent ebullitions of fury, which are so frequently, yet uselessly, vented from the overburthened heart; yet here, all was, in outward appearance, calm and unruffled, so much so, as to baffle even his wonted effrontery; and he hesitated to return an answer. The Princess perceived his indecision, and hoping, by lenient, yet resolute measures, to gain time, if not ultimately to effect her escape, she prevented a reply, by adding—"I perceive you are but the tool of some superior power, who has long persecuted me, and even at this instant, perhaps flatters himself that the unhappy Adeline is in his power, and that his subservient instrument has effected his nefarious commission; but," continued the Princess, looking at Martuccio with an eye under

under the beams of which his countenance fell, and at the same time lifting up her hands to Heaven, "let the usurper consider that there is an all-ruling Power that overlooks his most secret actions; and that, although for purposes unknown to us, it permits vice to reign triumphant for a time, yet it will never desert those who pursue the paths of virtue; and Adeline de Mountfort feels herself as safe in the wilds of the forest, as if surrounded by the satellites of power."

There is something indescribable in virtue, the influence of which, even the most abandoned cannot at all times resist; and although it may not deter the consummate villain from ultimately pursuing his nefarious designs, yet it acts as a temporary check upon the immediate propensity.

The Princess perceived the effect her appeal had produced, and willing, if possible, to induce her betrayer to reconduct her to the convent, from which he had so artfully decoyed her, she made use of every argu-

ment in her power to obtain her purpose. The protection of her own family from the dread of Albert's resentment, their unbounded generosity, together with every temptation that appeared likely to persuade, were promised, in language calculated to overcome the most rigorous and determined.

Martuccio listened in sullen silence, and seemed as if weighing in his own mind the proposals of the Princess. Hope for an instant revived, until the former, breaking from the taciturnity which he had so inflexibly retained, annihilated the flattering prospect, by observing, that indebted as he was to Albert, the reigning Prince of Clagenfurth, his inclination, his allegiance, and every tie of friendship, obliged him to favour his cause. The charge of deception he readily avowed; he even acknowledged it to be his own plan, and justified it upon the grounds that the passion of the Prince was uncontrollable, and that he was determined to seize by force the Princess of Clagenfurth,

Clagenfurth, since all entreaties either to admit himself, or emissaries, were rigidly denied to him—"Confident of this resolution," continued Martuccio, "which was even ready to be put in practice, and sensible that in the execution of it, much unnecessary violence would be used, neither indeed could the fatal consequences be foreseen, which might attend it, I prevailed upon him to listen to a scheme, which accident alone suggested; but which, if successful, would answer every purpose, and prevent any of those dreadful circumstances so much to be feared. The result you know. The late accident (Adeline turned away with horror) was the act of a moment, not of deliberation; and I trust that the strangers, whoever they were, will arrive time enough to give succour to the unfortunate monk. Let me, however, assure you, that although in the power of Albert, you have nothing to dread, as I have express orders, when arrived at the place of your present destination, to pay every at-

tention due to the Princess of Clagenfurth. It certainly was not my wish to have made this discovery, until our arrival at the rendezvous, where the retinue appointed to attend you are in waiting; let me then entreat you to suffer me to conduct you to some place where you may obtain the necessary refreshment."

The Princess listened with calmness to the recital of Martuccio; it informed her of little more than she already suspected; she considered, however, that in her present state, resistance would avail nothing, but might tend to render her more unable to bear up against her misfortunes, and perhaps deprive her of the opportunity of counteracting his schemes. Besides, she began to find her spirits sink; but this, or the certain prospect of death itself, would have been of little moment, had not the recurrence of her thoughts to her long-lost Rodolphus stimulated her to preserve that life for him, which she would with pleasure have laid down for his sake:

The force with which she had been dragged through the resisting briars, had deprived her of great part of her apparel; and to return to the carriage was a proposal which she was well aware would not be consented to by her companion; adjusting, therefore, the disorder of her dress, as well as circumstances would permit, she silently suffered herself to be conducted into a path, which appeared opposite to the direction in which they were before travelling. Having at length reached a spot where four ways met, Martuccio hesitated a few moments, looking around him, as if to descry the proper avenue by which he could emancipate himself from the forest. Adeline watched his looks, and fancied that she perceived an irresolution in his manner. She was once more upon the point of addressing him, when catching hold of her arm, with an assurance he had never before used, and which for the moment alarmed her, he desired her to hasten forward as rapidly as possible, when they should soon

arrive at a cottage, where refreshment might be procured. A lingering hope, that she might find protection in the benevolence of its inhabitants, induced the Princess to comply, without visible reluctance; and after travelling some time further, frequently changing their course, as if to prevent a recognition of it, the promised shelter appeared in view. Adeline hailed the grateful appearance, as she found herself almost overcome by the agitation both of mind and body. Before, however, they entered the cottage, her companion taking their future hostess, who appeared at the first summons, aside, whispered to her in private; a low obeisance bespoke a ready acquiescence. These preliminaries being adjusted, they entered the humble dwelling; the appearance of the inside corresponded with the aspect from without; but although poverty was conspicuous, yet an air of such simple neatness pervaded the whole, as astonished the Princess, who expected to have beheld one of those desolate
ruins,

ruins, so frequently the residence of the indigent peasantry. A meal, coarse, yet served up with cleanliness, invited even the most fastidious stomach; and Adeline, who felt herself nearly exhausted, readily partook of the tempting repast. This being concluded, she, without seemingly paying any attention to Martuccio, asked the cottager, who waited upon her at an humble distance, as if conscious of her superior rank; if she could retire to any apartment where she might take some rest? A significant glance was exchanged between her companion and the mistress of the cottage, which was not unobserved by the Princess; all remarks, however, were rendered needless, by her being informed by her hostess, that the only apartment in which she could rest undisturbed should be prepared for her as soon as possible—"For unused," said she, "to the company of strangers, her husband, whose arrival she every instant expected, and herself, occupied the only one at present fitted up; though she

assured

assured her that in a few minutes she could make the other, which was the only one they possessed besides, very comfortable." The talkative hostess was proceeding, unmindful of the fatigue of the Princess, which was very visible, to expatiate upon the various articles of accommodation, when a stern and peremptory command from Martuccio to hasten them, sent her muttering from the apartment. In a much shorter time than could be supposed, every thing was in readiness; and the Princess, although with an heart ill at ease, and sensible of her unprotected state, (for she had little hopes of receiving any assistance from the inhabitant of the cottage, who seemed entirely in the interest of her conductor) retired, trusting in that Providence which she had constantly believed would guard her from every evil.

It has been before observed, that Martuccio was much better acquainted with the intricacies of the forest than he had chosen to discover; and he now found the recognition

nition to be of peculiar importance. At first he was rather doubtful by what quarter he should emerge from it; but his usual good fortune conducting him to the spot where the four ways met, instantly brought the whole scene to his recollection, although it was some years since he had wandered through its purlieus. He remembered the cottage to which he conducted Adeline, as it had frequently been used by him upon different occasions; and although he was ignorant who its present inhabitants were, yet he made little doubt but that they were similar in their principles to those whom he recollected to have been the tenants. But even should he be disappointed in this expectation, he was prepared to overcome all difficulties: they were still in the dominions of Albert, and his name, he doubted not, would be an ample passport. This, however, he reserved as a dernier resource; and as he was well apprised of the mercenary disposition of the peasantry in general, he determined to
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attach the cottagers to his cause by the most liberal promises, and fancied that if he could once gain the female, her husband would readily acquiesce in the terms. As soon, therefore, as it was ascertained that the Princess was asleep, for notwithstanding all her fears, exhausted nature claimed her rights, Martuccio explained, as far as he deemed necessary, the enterprize he was engaged in, and the necessity he had been under of claiming the hospitality of the cottage. Few words were necessary; promises, well adapted for the occasion, were profusely made, and as greedily accepted; and a short conversation apparently bound the female in the chains of servile obedience to all his commands.

The situation of the monk had not been forgotten by Martuccio, and it became an object of material concern to him, to know whether he had expired, or been carried off by the strangers. This intelligence he conceived might be obtained through the medium of the husband, who was momentarily

tarily expected to return home; however, before he committed his secret to his care, he deemed it necessary to reconnoitre his approach, in order to judge whether he appeared of a description proper to be trusted upon such an occasion; for notwithstanding he thought himself certain of the female's interest, yet as he could not procure a direct answer relative to the occupation of her husband, his natural caution prompted him to be circumspect. To accomplish his purpose, without giving suspicion of any design, he walked to and fro before the cottage, making various observations upon its situation, and several other comments which he conceived might take off the attention of his hostess (who repeatedly asked him if he would not repose himself) from his principal object. Every minute seemed an hour, as Adeline might awake, and by her presence frustrate his design. His expectation was at length repaid, as at the end of a long narrow avenue which led to the cottage, appeared a
stout

stout healthy-looking man, clad in the ordinary costume of the country. As soon as he arrived, Martuccio apologized for having intruded upon the cottage, in order to obtain refreshment for a distressed female, who was sinking under fatigue. A cordial welcome banished every unfavourable suspicion from the mind of Martuccio, who, however, was at a loss how to enter upon the subject relative to the monk.

The return of the peasant introduced a fresh supply of their home-brewed beverage; and during the conversation which ensued, the latter mentioned his surprise at having seen upon the adjacent common part of a broken carriage, together with a dead horse, and that near it were the remains of a large quantity of blood, although there was no appearance by which he could judge how it came there. Martuccio, after a moment's thought, inquired whether he supposed it might not proceed from some outrage committed by the banditti, who, he understood, did not solely
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confine themselves to the mountains, but frequently descended into the valley? A hectic flush seemed to pass over the countenance of the cottager at this suggestion ; but a glance from his wife instantly restored his usual serenity. Martuccio perceived the sudden transition, but prudently took no notice of it ; and as no immediate answer was returned, and he had obtained the knowledge he wanted, without discovering his interest in it, he adroitly turned the conversation upon various subjects, quite foreign to the existing circumstances.

It had been Martuccio's intention to have engaged the assistance of the husband ; but naturally suspicious, he abandoned his design : he became restless, and eager to depart ; and more than once desired his hostess to see whether the lady was not sufficiently refreshed to resume her journey. The answers he received appeared illusive, and solely calculated for delay ; he perceived also some intelligent glances pass between the husband and wife, which
alarmed

alarmed him ; and he most severely blamed his precipitancy in having ventured to remain there, without a more careful investigation of the inhabitants. He knew he was well armed, and depended upon the all-powerful name of Albert for a ready obedience to all his commands ; but although this might give him some power, yet he had too frequently experienced the daring independency of the residents in that forest, to have his mind perfectly at ease. Nor did the conduct of Sebastian, so was the cottager named, serve to alleviate his increasing anxiety. The questions he asked, although they were not couched in direct terms, evidently tended to discover in what enterprize he was engaged. Martuccio for a long time attempted to parry this inquisitiveness ; but at last some expressions, which conscious guilt attributed to himself, roused his dormant passions, and he haughtily commanded his host to cease his impertinent curiosity.

Sebastian received the authoritative dic-
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tate with every symptom of humility ; and cordiality was in appearance once more restored. A fresh supply of the generous beverage was ordered ; when it was brought, taking the flowing can into his hands, and turning to his wife, he said—" Come, Marian, here's success to your brother, my comrade Bernardo ; I expect his arrival every instant."

A sudden exclamation from Martuccio prevented the unfinished draught. The eyes of Sebastian and Marian were immediately fixed upon him ; every nerve trembled with agitation and restrained passion ; and so great was his confusion at intelligence so unexpected, and which threatened to overturn all his high-wrought plans, that he rose suddenly from the table, and regardless of the observations which might be made upon the peculiarity of his conduct, he rushed out of the house.

Marian seemed surprised at the behaviour of her guest ; and was beginning to express her astonishment to Sebastian, when
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the latter, without noticing the past, made inquiries respecting the female. Marian hesitated, as if fearful of the consequences, should she, after her promises to Martuccio, betray the confidence which she supposed he had placed in her. Upon a repetition, however, of the demand, in a tone which she dared not disobey, she mentioned the circumstances of his arrival, and the extravagant promises which he had made her, should his female companion, upon her awaking, shew any repugnance to continue her journey.

Sebastian seemed buried in reflection ; but hearing the sound of approaching footsteps, which he concluded was his guest returning, he turned to his wife, and with a look, which she could easily interpret, said, hastily—“ *Remember your duty.*” He had scarcely uttered these words, when the door of the cottage opening, Martuccio entered, and commanded Marian to rouse his companion, as circumstances compelled him to recommence their journey immediately ;

ately ; so entirely was his mind occupied, that he seemed to have forgotten that Sebastian was present, until turning suddenly round, he discovered him seated quietly in one corner of the fire-place. Had a basilisk appeared, it could not have produced a more sudden effect. He had thrown off the long cloak which he wore, and which answered the double purpose of protecting him from the inclemency of the weather, and also of concealing, upon necessary occasions, his usual dress, which was the general costume of those who were called the *hunters of the Alps*. Their vest was dark green ; and by their side hung a scymitar, confessedly more for use than shew, while a broad belt, in which were stuck two brace of pistols, completed their equipment.

The terror of Martuccio, upon the discovery of this formidable appearance, was too real to be mistaken ; and before he could sufficiently recollect himself to form some plan of action upon such an emergency,

gency, a shrill whistle from without completed his alarm. Neither Sebastian, however, or his wife, who had delayed executing his peremptory command, took any notice of his confusion; and the former, upon hearing the well-known signal, carelessly observed—"It is Bernardo returned; let him in, Marian; he must be in want of some refreshment." A prompt obedience shewed the pleasure with which Marian executed the order, and in a few moments Bernardo entered. After mutual congratulations, Sebastian introduced his guest to Bernardo, as a stranger, who, having the charge of a female, had been obliged through fatigue to take some rest at his cottage. His manner gave some ease to the trembling hypocrite, and his hopes of pursuing his journey unmolested revived. These, however, were momentary, as Bernardo, after returning the salutation, by throwing aside a similar cloak to that worn by Sebastian, discovered himself equipped the same as the latter.

Transfixed

Transfixed with terror, Martuccio mechanically sat down in the vacant seat allotted to him. He remained, however, totally silent, fearful of repeating those commands which he had given on his re-entrance, in so peremptory a manner.

In the meantime, Adeline had enjoyed a calm uninterrupted repose; and she awoke, not only refreshed in body, but with her spirits much revived by a dream, which she fancied prognosticated an happy end to her misfortunes.

It is well known, that in the earlier ages, dreams were almost universally considered as the harbingers of good or evil; and such was the implicit faith put in them, that when their meaning was veiled in an obscurity too dense for common capacities to develop their meaning, recourse was immediately had to those beings who were supposed to act under a superior agency, and consequently possessed the power of penetrating into, and explaining, the greatest mysteries, as well as foretelling future events.

events. Neither are there in this more enlightened age wanting men, who cannot dispossess themselves of a similar belief of those fantastic visions of the brain, although they may not be quite so superstitious as to have recourse to similar measures for their interpretation.

Unconscious of any addition to the inhabitants of the cottage, the Princess descended from her apartment. Upon opening the door she started; the impulse, however, was momentary, and she advanced to a seat which was offered, with a dignity that awed the beholders. Being informed by Marian that it was her husband and brother who were present, she gracefully thanked the former for the kind attention which she had received; and without noticing her travelling companion, prepared to partake of the simple refreshment of milk and eggs, which had been provided for her. Yet notwithstanding this apparent calmness, her mind was harassed by a contrariety of emotions. On her first entrance,

trance, the habiliments of Bernardo and Sebastian had most forcibly attracted her notice; and she shuddered with apprehension, lest she should have fallen into more savage hands even than those of her base betrayer. She had frequently heard of the banditti, who were reported to infest the neighbouring mountains; and every circumstance seemed to point out Bernardo and Sebastian as belonging to that dreaded society. Yet their behaviour appeared divested of that savage fierceness which her imagination had painted to itself, as the characteristics of men of that description: she had also observed, that they frequently took an opportunity of looking at her, when they conceived they should be the least observed; still their looks seemed more of compassion than otherwise; and she almost resolved to discover her rank, and throwing herself upon their generosity, claim their protection; but the dread, lest the knowledge might rather tempt them to detain her, arose par

amount to her first resolution, and deterred her from putting her intention into execution. She was confident that they were not either accomplices of Martuccio, or in his interest, as he evidently appeared peculiarly uneasy ; indeed, he was sensible of the precarious situation into which he had so incautiously thrown himself, as he entertained the same suspicions as the Princess, and was too well acquainted with the customs of their society, not to be apprehensive of the most terrible consequences in falling into their power. The defeat of his plan respecting the Princess became a secondary consideration ; his own liberty, perhaps his life, was at stake. For some time he was irresolute in what manner to act, until roused to exertion, by observing Bernardo and Sebastian in close conversation, the tenor of which he could not discover, he abruptly inquired of the Princess if she was ready to recommence her journey ? Although prepared to expect such a question, the demand seemed to electrify
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the whole party. A moment's consideration, however, decided the conduct of Adeline; and she silently arose to make preparations for her departure. Bernardo and Sebastian looked at each other, not unobserved by Martuccio, who narrowly watched every movement. Decision was necessary; thanking, therefore, the inhabitants of the cottage for their kind accommodation, he seized the hand of the Princess, and hastily emerged into the forest.

As soon as he had lost sight of the cottage, he struck into an obscure path, not doubting but by that means he should elude any pursuit, should their late companions attempt to overtake them; for judging of others by himself, he considered himself far from being safe from their power. Each continued silent, though from different causes. The Princess deeply reflected upon her situation, and more than once regretted the irresolution which prevented her from throwing herself upon the mercy of the cottagers, rather than have

submitted to a voluntary accompaniment of her insidious betrayer ; while Martuccio even wondered at his good fortune, in having, as he flattered himself, escaped from a danger so imminent, without any abandonment of his original design ; a few hours, he was confident, would bring him to the place of rendezvous, where the minions of Albert were in waiting to conduct the unfortunate Princess to a castle belonging to him, situated in the interior of the mountains, and deemed inaccessible. His success was at length complete ; and Adeline, finding herself in no immediate danger, calmly resigned herself to her fate, not doubting but that her disappearance would rouse the vigilance of all the adherents to the house of Mountfort.

During these transactions, Albert was awaiting in the utmost anxiety intelligence from Martuccio ; he had been informed, by means of his numerous spies, of his success in removing the Princess from the protection of the abbess of St. Veil, yet no account had

had arrived of any further proceedings. Her disappearance had occasioned various conjectures; many supposed that she had really escaped, and had sought the protection of some of her numerous family; while others, who knew the interest that Albert took concerning her, conjectured the truth, which the long and unusual absence of the new favourite tended to confirm. A messenger dispatched from the rendezvous by Martuccio, banished the uncertainty of Albert, who not doubting but that the allegiance of the principality of Clagenfurth was firmly rooted, secretly prepared to quit that city, in order to repair to the Castle of Mittewald, where he trusted, that either by complacency or terror, he should obtain complete possession of the person of Adeline.

The evening subsequent to the arrival of the welcome messenger was destined for his departure; seated in the retirement of his palace, he sat ruminating on his expected happiness, when a sudden and un-

expected incident not only put to flight every pleasure which his luxurious imagination had formed, but threatened also to destroy his very existence.

Early in the forenoon previous to his intended departure, a courier, breathless with haste, and pale with terror, rushed into the apartment, where, wrapt in deep meditation, Albert lay extended upon a couch. An intrusion so daring and unusual caused him to start from his reclining posture; and he hastily demanded the occasion of such presumption. Already sufficiently terrified, the trembling messenger could with difficulty inform him, that the Chevalier D'Armfeldt was marching with the utmost expedition towards the city of Clagenfurth, distributing manifestoes throughout the country as he passed, alledging that Albert, whom he denominated an usurper had basely sought to obtain possession of the relatives of the deceased Prince, in order that he might annihilate a race, which he pursued with unrelenting vengeance; he

he added, that the peasants flocked to him in crowds, uttering the most dreadful threats of retaliation for the murder of their late sovereign; and that a few hours would bring them within sight of the city, as he had, with the utmost difficulty, outrode the foremost detachments.

Albert, though by nature brave, turned pale at this intelligence; in an instant he comprehended the extent of his danger; yet his presence of mind did not forsake him; he immediately ordered the messenger to summon his attendants, whom he dispatched to collect such of his friends to the palace, whom he deemed true to his interests; while in the meantime, he himself flew to different parts of the city, in order to examine its ramparts, and to put every place into a proper state to repel the threatened attack.

The intelligence quickly circulated; all was bustle and confusion, and the terrified inhabitants dreaded lest they should experience a repetition of the same scenes

which had before created so great a devastation. But although Albert was thus active, his mind was ill at ease; it is true, he soon found himself surrounded by a numerous body of troops, sufficient, had he been certain of their fidelity, to have bade defiance to any assault; but his conscience whispered to him, that he had ill-deserved their confidence; and he had every reason to fear, that upon the appearance of their fellow-citizens before the walls, they would join, rather than oppose them. Part, however, of his army was composed of those troops with whom he had achieved the conquest of the principality; and as these were chiefly his hereditary vassals, he felt a dependance of their performing their duty; these he stationed at the most vulnerable parts of the city, selecting from them a certain number of the most approved to attend upon his own person. Having thus performed all the duties of an experienced general, he awaited the hour of attack. To the superficial observance of his officers, his

his demeanour appeared firm and courageous: rewards proportionate to their services were lavishly promised to such as continued faithful to his interests, while threats of the most signal vengeance were denounced against those whom he branded with the appellation of rebellious subjects. His more immediate dependants, and those who, as before observed, had originally assisted him in the conquest of the principality, repeated their vows of fidelity; and with reiterated shouts of "*Long live the heroic Albert,*" demanded to be led against the enemy, whom they denominated traitors to their Prince and country. But Albert, notwithstanding he admired the ardour of his soldiers, restrained, but with some difficulty, their enthusiastic courage. He was sensible of the abilities of his opponent; for although his pride would not permit him openly to avow it, yet his conscience told him, that to the well-arranged system of his former friend, the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, he had been indebted for the

principal victories which he had obtained; and particularly that which gave him possession of the principality of Clagenfurth. His surprise at the desertion of the Chevalier was extreme; for although he was convinced that he would not openly countenance a dishonourable action, yet he never deemed it within the range of possibility, that he would become so inveterate an enemy as to seek his destruction.

The absence of Martuccio was now much regretted by him, as he was in want of a man whose penetrating genius was so peculiarly calculated for developing his adversaries designs. Gladly would he have recalled him from the service in which he was engaged; but that was impossible, as the distance was too great; besides, it was become hazardous for any one to leave the city, so rapid had been the advance of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, who, by his energy, was in hopes of taking Albert unprepared for any resistance. The vigilance of the latter, however, defeated his design; still
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the Chevalier found means to hold a correspondence with those within the walls who, he was well apprized, had always, though in secret, lamented the fate of their former Prince. By these means he contrived the circulation of his manifestoes, even within the city, which were eagerly read by the populace, in bold defiance of the severity of the punishments which were denounced, and indeed daily put in force, both against the circulators, and those in whose possession they were found. This conduct served only to increase the hatred which no inconsiderable portion of the inhabitants entertained against the Prince; and it not only roused to action the real friends of their former sovereign, but likewise determined the wavering. It was in vain that the officers most in the confidence of Albert pointed out the impolicy of the daily executions which took place; their advice was spurned with indignation, and they were haughtily commanded to attend to their duty. The decisive hour

at length arrived ; the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, well aware of the situation of the interior, made a most furious assault, and was received with an intrepidity that baffled all his attempts. Far from being discouraged by a first failure, he repeatedly renewed his efforts with redoubled vigour ; but Albert, who found himself better seconded than he had reason to expect, through the means of his hereditary troops, who were so judiciously disposed as to keep the malcontents in awe, and effectually prevent them from giving the assistance which they had secretly promised to their fellow-citizens, displayed a more than ordinary courage : his activity was incredible ; he appeared to be present every where, as whenever he perceived any of his troops oppressed, and inclined to give way, he flew to their assistance, and never failed of affording them the requisite relief. Even his enemies admired his intrepidity, and lamented that it was not displayed in a more just cause.

Night put an end to the attack, and the
Chevalier,

Chevalier, though defeated, retired in good order, determined upon making a final effort the next morning. Both parties were employed, during this short cessation, in arranging the necessary dispositions ; little time was allowed for rest. The victorious Albert employed himself in visiting those parts of the fortifications which had received injury, and in ordering new defences to be formed. His vigilance was equal to his intrepidity ; and he looked forward with the utmost confidence to the final issue of the morrow's encounter. He had in his own mind formed a plan as daring as judicious, which, if success crowned his endeavours, and of that he could scarce entertain a doubt, would irretrievably overthrow the prospects of the insurgents. In order to execute his plan with the greater certainty, he made some necessary changes in the prior arrangement and disposition of his troops. Instead of attending personally to the defence of the fortifications, he committed them to the care of his bravest officers,

officers, of whose fidelity and regard he was well assured ; while he himself, with a select body of men, chosen from the whole army, kept in readiness to make a sally, or seize upon any advantage, which either the neglect of his opponent, or the successful opposition of his own army, might afford him.

His adversary was no less diligent ; he found his troops, although not victorious, so far from being dispirited, that they burned with impatience to retrieve the disgrace which they had suffered the preceding day ; so strong indeed was their ardour, that they could scarce be restrained from making a fresh assault during the night ; and it required not only the greatest exertion of all their officers, but also the whole ascendancy which the Chevalier had obtained over their affections, to prevent so rash and precarious a measure.

A circumstance as unexpected as extraordinary, contributed to raise their spirits still higher. Soon after midnight, secret intelligence

intelligence was brought to the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, that, during the ensuing day, he would, when least expected, receive a considerable reinforcement. This message much surprised him, particularly as confiding in the assistance which he expected to find within the walls of the city, from the friends of its late sovereign, he had deemed the army under his command sufficiently powerful to attain his object, without engaging any neighbouring state or even the family of the former Prince, to join him with their troops. The courier who brought the information, either could not, or was commanded not to disclose either the strength of the reinforcement, or by whom it was to be conducted. Little doubt, however, could be entertained of his veracity, as he added, that he was ordered to remain as an hostage for the truth of his assertion.

Ere the harbinger of the morn had announced its approach, both parties were in preparation for the awful event. At the
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well-known signal they flew to their arms. The valour displayed on both sides was equal, and while death thinned the opposing combatants with indiscriminate relentness, victory was for a long time held in equal balance. At length, Albert, who, as before mentioned, had reserved himself in order to seize the first advantage, conceived that the critical opportunity presented itself, which he had been awaiting with the utmost impatience. The Chevalier D'Armfeldt had partially succeeded in an attack which he made with the choicest of his troops, who, conceiving themselves already victorious, rushed incautiously forward, disordering their ranks, and leaving themselves exposed to any sudden attack. It was in vain that the Chevalier, who well knew the abilities of Albert, and his peculiar genius in profiting by any oversight or mistake of his adversary, endeavoured, together with his officers, to prevent this irregularity; flushed with success, his troops remained deaf either to orders or entreaties.

treaties. It is true indeed, their valour would have been successful, had it not been for the unexpected and daring manœuvre of Albert, whom they fancied would scarcely venture to hazard a sally from the city, from which, if he was unsuccessful, he must be inevitably cut off. But that Prince, confident in his accustomed good fortune, and depending upon his own example, and the courage of those whom he had selected for the occasion, spurned at all trivial impediments. His attentive and comprehensive mind perceived in an instant the irregularity of his adversaries, which he attributed to the right cause, a secure confidence of victory. He instantly flew to one of the gates of the city, and commanding it to be opened, sallied forth, and with a fury irresistible, fell upon the rear of the conquering troops. The tide of success was immediately turned, and the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, who, notwithstanding the rashness of his army, deemed the day his own, saw himself in a moment not only deprived

deprived of his hard-bought advantage, but in danger of a total defeat. In vain he attempted to rally his broken forces; all was terror, confusion, and despair. At that critical instant, a loud shout arrested the attention of the contending parties. The troops of the Chevalier, who naturally conjectured that it proceeded from the promised reinforcement, which they had utterly despaired of, recovered their alarm and rallied; while those under the command of Albert were in their turn surprised. The scene was instantly changed; the newly-arrived troops, breaking through all impediments, charged with such impetuosity, as to penetrate to the centre of Albert's squadrons, throwing them into the utmost confusion. Numbers became victims to this sudden and unexpected attack, and his choicest warriors, unable to resist the torrent, gave the last proof of their attachment and fidelity, by dying sword in hand. The situation of the Prince was now become desperate; most of his brave com-
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panions had fallen around him; cut off from his retreat into the city of Clagenfurth, and nearly surrounded by the enemy, who had recovered their panic, a glorious death seemed his sole resource; for as he could expect no mercy from his conquerors, should he be taken prisoner, he deemed it more suitable to his former glory to die in the field of battle; resolved on this, he prepared to rush into the midst of the conquering squadrons, and either cut his way through them, or perish in the attempt. Furiously he rushed forward, accompanied by a few, whom the ravages of war had hitherto spared, and who resolved to share the fate of their commander, when by chance, casting his eyes to the right, they glanced upon an object which seemed to paralyze every power of exertion. Suddenly he stopped, as if deprived of motion; cold drops of sweat bedewed his visage, while his trembling limbs could scarce sustain his tottering frame. Amazement seized those few brave companions who had adhered to him,

him, especially as they could perceive no visible cause that was likely to produce such an effect. In vain, however, they attempted to arouse him; inattentive to the danger of certain destruction, which was approaching towards him with rapid strides, he continued to gaze at the object which had first arrested his progress, frequently uttering frantic, but inexplicable exclamations of terror. The sword which had lately gleamed so tremendous in his hands, and had led the way to victory, quitted his grasp, and was recovered only by the attention of one of his officers. No time, however, was to be lost, and his friends finding it still in vain to attempt rousing him to exertion, and perceiving the near approach of the enemy, seized the reins of his horse, and with the utmost difficulty and danger, both to themselves and the Prince, at length conveyed him in safety from the field of battle.

In the mean time, the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, seeing the effect occasioned by the
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promised reinforcement, neglected no opportunity of improving his success; still he remained ignorant of the quality of those friends who had arrived at so critical a moment as to turn the fate of the day. He had remarked the air and intrepidity of two in particular, who appeared to have the principal command; but as their beavers were closed, he could not distinguish their features. Their armour also, as well as that of the whole body, was peculiar; nor could he recollect, by the banners which they bore, to what prince or state they belonged. It was evident, however, that one of the leaders, who appeared to be the youngest, and who confessedly paid a great deference to his companion, seemed principally to seek a personal revenge upon Albert, as he was eager to encounter him, frequently calling upon his name, and challenging him to single combat. Fortune, however, prevented their meeting; and as the troops of the latter had either yielded or quitted the field of battle, the
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unknown heroes, at the earnest entreaties of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, after giving orders to their troops to repair to the accustomed place of rendezvous, entered the city of Clagenfurth in triumph, where they soon made themselves known to the generous chief.

The flight and escape of Albert was soon known, not only to the army of the Chevalier, but also to the troops in the city, who, perceiving that they should be unable to defend its walls much longer with any prospect of success, and being in momentary dread of an insurrection of the inhabitants, gladly accepted the proposals of D'Armfeldt, who immediately entered the gates of Clagenfurth with his victorious army, amid the loud and enthusiastic congratulations of the long oppressed citizens, who, knowing the honourable nature of their present conqueror, looked forward with a pleasing anticipation of enjoying that freedom which they had been so long deprived of.

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We shall now for the present leave both the fugitive Prince, and also his conqueror; the latter engaged in restoring the original laws, and organizing the various departments of the principality, while the former, almost unconscious of past events, was conveyed by his brave companions into a place of safety, and revert to the transactions which took place, both at the residence of the Count Von Werdenberg, and also at the monastery, where we left Sternheim and Berthold, awaiting the return of the messengers whom they had dispatched from thence.

Previous to their departure from the sequestered retreat of the Count Von Werdenberg, it had been settled, that the latter, whose intention it had been to pay a visit to Vienna, in order to claim the protection and countenance of the Emperor for his young protégées, should remain, together with Theodore and Matilda, at the hermitage, until the event of the visit to the convent of St. Pierre was made known

to them, either by the return of the parties themselves, or by a messenger, dispatched by them for that especial purpose. By this means the Count, who interested himself most warmly in the future welfare both of the injured Princess of Clagenfurth, and also of the newly-discovered daughter of the deceased Prince, expected he should obtain such unquestionable proof of the perfidious conduct of Albert, as would enable him not only to denounce him as a traitor to the established laws of knight-hood and honour, but as a tyrant, who set no bounds to the means by which he might fortify his usurpation, and glut his revenge against the family of the late lamented Prince of Clagenfurth. Upon the well-known magnanimity of the Emperor, he relied for countenance and support: that sovereign had obtained, with the unanimous consent of his admiring subjects, the most glorious of all titles, "*The Father of his People.*" To the injured he gave redress, to the needy support. Boldly, therefore,

therefore, did the Count assure himself of engaging the interest of such an exalted character, for the widow and the orphan. It was consequently with no small impatience that he awaited the wished-for intelligence, which became more desirous, as he was sensible of the dangerous situation in which Matilda was placed. It is true, that in the honour of Theodore, he placed the most implicit confidence; nor was he less assured of the native innocence and virtue of his lovely charge; still his thoughts would, though unwillingly, sometimes revert to the imbecility of human nature, which frequently placing too great a confidence in the purity of its intentions, fell a martyr to that very security on which its defence was placed. Day after day, however, passed without any message from the travellers; and the time when even their return might be expected, approached. As it drew nearer, the satisfaction of the Count was most visible, while, on the contrary, Theodore, though he endeavoured to conceal

his thoughts, rather dreaded than wished for its arrival. He had so long habituated himself to the company of his beloved Matilda, and had been so accustomed to that sweet converse which a mutual and sincere affection rendered peculiarly engaging, that he looked forward to a separation with fear and dismay. Although convinced of her affection, he regarded the purposed journey to Vienna as the bane of his happiness. He was well aware of the calls of honour which would be made upon him; and though the hero still existed, yet, when the idea of separation from the idol of his regard crossed his imagination, the lover triumphed. The Count was not unobservant of his conduct, and easily penetrated through the thin veil that concealed the sentiments of his heart; for unused to dissimulation, Theodore, notwithstanding all his caution, could not express himself so guardedly, during the various conversations that naturally ensued respecting the conduct which it would probably be necessary to

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to adopt in the situation of their affairs, as not to betray the conflict between the hero and the lover ; notwithstanding the Count had attained this knowledge, he prudently avoided taking notice of the discovery, having frequently experienced that opposition to any passion in which the heart is interested, serves rather to increase than diminish it. Besides, although he lamented that he had not consented to Theodore's proposal of accompanying Sternheim, by which he had himself contributed to their growing affection, yet he felt convinced, that when the honour of his family demanded his exertion, his natural courage, now enervated by inactivity, would shine forth with renovated lustre, and even acquire a greater energy, when the object of his affection was destined as the reward of valour. Of Matilda's conduct, the Count entertained no doubt ; she had already displayed such a firmness of character, yet blended with a natural mildness of disposition, as promised fair to be a protection

against the unavoidable uncertainties and disappointments of life; and he was certain that her affection for Theodore, though as fervid and sincere as ever glowed within the female bosom, would excite him to pursue, rather than withdraw him from duties which his high rank in the world, and the power he would hereafter possess, exacted of him.

At length, when the fear lest some unforeseen accident had befallen their friends, had nearly superseded the hopes of their return, the appointed signal was heard. Joy and satisfaction instantly took place of every other sensation, and was visible in every countenance. Hassan hurried to the secret entrance, no less impatient than his master, to obtain intelligence from the absent friends. He had some hopes that they themselves were returned, and experienced a severe disappointment, when, on opening the gate, he encountered a person in the habit of one of the lay-brothers of a monastery, who introduced himself by saying that
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he was the bearer of important intelligence from the Abbot of Schonberg to Henry Count Von Werdenberg; and requesting that he might have an immediate audience, as his speedy return was a matter of the utmost importance. Hassan, satisfied that the messenger bore dispatches relative to Berthold and Sternheim, not only by his having given the private signal, but also by his mentioning the name of his master, which he knew had never been disclosed to any but the Emperor, and the absent friends, was anxious to hear of their welfare; he therefore inquired concerning them; the answer, however, he received greatly surprised him, as he was informed that the dispatches, to be delivered to the Count, were given to him by his superior, and that he knew little about those concerning whom he inquired, except that two strangers, of whose names he was ignorant, had some time before arrived at the monastery, bearing with them a wounded monk, who still remained there in an invalid state:

that if these were the people he meant, which he had reason to suppose they were, as he believed the dispatches had been sent at their request, they were, at the time of his leaving the monastery, in good health, but seemed very anxious to resume their journey. There was something in this answer which appeared mysterious to Hassan, as he could not account by what means they had been induced to deviate from the direct road to St. Pierre, so far as to reach the monastery of Schonberg ; but not doubting but that the dispatches sent to the Count would elucidate the business, he hastened to introduce the welcome messenger.

The information sent by Berthold occasioned the greatest grief both to the Count and Theodore ; it contained the narrative of the wounded monk respecting the Princess Adeline, together with his own motives for having deferred the original intention of proceeding to St. Pierre, which, from the unforeseen events that had occurred, appeared to him useless, and an unnecessary

unnecessary loss of time. This fresh insult to the house of De Mountfort roused all the dormant passions of the enamoured Theodore, and it required all the prudence and experience of the Count Von Werdenberg to restrain his fury within bounds; and it was most probable that had not a prospect of taking a severe retaliation upon the aggressor presented itself, that not even the entreaties of friendship, assisted even by the superior power of love, would have prevented him from undertaking some desperate measures.

Whilst Theodore thus breathed nothing but revenge, the amiable Matilda wept over the misfortunes of her unknown relative, for whom she felt a greater interest, as there was no doubt but that both of them were the objects of Albert's pursuit; and although she endeavoured to temper the impetuous ardour of her lover, yet she was far from wishing to deprive him of the honour of revenging the injury offered to his sister and herself.

A plan, sketched out by Berthold, and referred for the approbation of the Count, was enclosed in the dispatches sent to the hermitage ; so judiciously was it arranged, that success appeared certain, and of course it readily received the concurrence of that celebrated warrior, who himself determined to take a principal part in the execution of it ; and as no time was to be lost, the messenger was, after a hasty refreshment, sent back to the monastery with the intelligence of his intentions. As soon as the courier was departed, the Count explained to Theodore the arrangement made by Berthold, informing him also of the resolution he had taken, and observing, that to his youthful arm he should leave the glory, while his own experience regulated the propriety of action.

As the result of these arrangements, however, was destined to produce the most important consequences, we shall enter into a more minute detail of them.

We have already given a partial account
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of Berthold, who was generally esteemed as the captain of a set of hardy and brave men, who inhabited the impenetrable recesses of the Julian Alps, and were commonly called banditti, although their actions ill deserved that title. No one in the country knew who Berthold was, or at what time he joined the society ; he was, however, greatly respected by the whole neighbourhood, and more particularly by the Count Von Werdenberg, to whom, at the first accidental interview, he freely disclosed himself, and was ever after in the strictest habits of friendship with him. As, however, we may, in the course of these volumes, have occasion to relate his history more at large, we shall, for the present, content ourselves with this short sketch, which we deemed necessary, previous to the developement of the operations suggested by him.

It may be recollected, that before Berthold and Sternheim commenced their expedition to the convent of St. Pierre, the

former requested the delay of a few days previous to their departure from the hermitage: by the means of his numerous spies, he had, before his arrival at the Count's, received private accounts of every thing that passed at the court of Clagenfurth, and indeed he was himself in possession of intelligence, believed to have been known only to two confidential friends of the late Prince. Against Albert he had a peculiar hatred, and only awaited a proper opportunity of satiating his vengeance upon him. The outrage committed upon the person of Matilda, he was confident, for reasons which he chose for the present to confine within his own breast, would rouse the spirit of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, not, only to shake off the allegiance he had hitherto paid to Albert, but also to become his determined enemy. For this reason he took care to send one of the scouts provided for him by the Count, with the intelligence of that Prince's attempt to obtain possession of her person, and of his
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own fortunate rescue of her, together with his having placed her under protection the most honourable, and sufficiently powerful to guard her from all future insult. At the same time he dispatched other couriers to all those under his command, with orders for them to assemble at a particular rendezvous, at a certain time; and as he well knew that he should punctually be obeyed; he would be ready to take advantage of any favourable opportunity. This he doubted not would soon arise, as he was convinced that D'Armfeldt would immediately, upon receiving the intelligence sent to him, commence the siege of Clagenfurth.

The plan therefore that he submitted for the approbation of the Count, was, that he should head his own troops, which, when collected, consisted of three hundred men, well armed and appointed, and lead them as near to the city of Clagenfurth as possible, without being discovered, by which means, he trusted that so unexpected an appearance, at some critical moment,

ment, would strike such terror into the enemy as to overwhelm them with destruction.

That Berthold possessed an intimate knowledge of the Chevalier D'Armfeldt, is evident from the result ; for no sooner had the latter received the communication sent him, than, confident of the sincere regard which both his officers and troops entertained for him, he immediately summoned the principal of them to a council, when he addressed them in the following discourse :—

“ Friends and fellow-soldiers, while I congratulate you upon the success which has crowned your valour with the wreath of victory, and obliged the natural enemies of your country to tremble before you, and to submit to such terms as to ensure it from any future disturbance, I am imperiously compelled to withdraw the veil which has hitherto concealed the atrocious designs of that Prince under whose tyrannic power the principality

pality of Clagenfurth has so long groaned. So long as Albert remained steady to the principles of honour, the friendship which subsisted between us claimed from me, and received every support in my power to bestow. Those whom I now address well know, that, deaf to the numerous solicitations with which I was perpetually assailed, I refused to forsake a man whose errors appeared to me solely the effect of ambition. The death of the late Prince was the chance of war. The indignity offered to his remains met not only with my open disapprobation, but my private remonstrances; and from that era I may date that almost imperceptible deviation from the cordiality which had so long subsisted between us. This last act, while it degraded the hero, alienated the affections even of those most attached to the conqueror. Still, had his inhuman revenge been satiated by this atrocious deed, time might have weakened the first impression, and subsequent acts of kindness and affection

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tion would, in all probability, have obliterated the terror of the trembling citizens, and obtained their confidence and applause. Ye all remember the general indignation excited upon that occasion ; yet, so severe were the chains by which the country was enthralled, that each individual was constrained to stifle their resentment, or breathe their murmurs in silence and secrecy. It is with honest pride and joy I perceive that such restraint no longer exists ; nor doubt I but that your long concealed fury will rage with redoubled force, when you are informed that the tyrant, unglutted with the vengeance which he has already executed upon the devoted family of your late beloved sovereign, not only dares to insult his relic with his proffered love, but having also, by means the most atrocious, obtained the knowledge of a circumstance hitherto unknown to the world in general, namely, that a daughter of the late Prince, by a former wife, who, for private reasons, was never publicly

publicly acknowledged by him, was in existence, he endeavoured to obtain possession of her person. The artifice he made use of succeeded; and the unsuspecting victim was consigned to the emissaries employed upon the occasion. Fortune, however, proved the friend of innocence; some conversation between her attendants betrayed the design for which she was removed from the convent, where she had been placed from her infancy, under the protection of its venerable abbess: alarmed at the discovery, yet scarce knowing how to take advantage of it, she at length resolved to claim the assistance of the first traveller she might accidentally meet. Again fate was propitious; Berthold, the brave, the generous captain of the mountain-troops, met, and rescued her from the base minions of the tyrant; and to ease her mind from all apprehensions of future insult, placed her under protection the most honourable. How much longer, my brave soldiers, are these insults to be endured?

endured ? Shall our wives, our children, be torn from us with impunity ? Shall——”

A loud and unanimous cry of “Down with the tyrant Albert,” obliged D’Armfeldt to pause. When silence was again restored, he continued, “I see your generous indignation ; but let it not be thought that I seek the overthrow of Albert to aggrandize myself ; no, a nobler purpose animates my bosom ; the young Prince Rodolphus still lives, secreted, and unknown to all, but those who snatched him from destruction ; it is for him, for Adeline, and for Matilda, the newly-discovered daughter of your late sovereign, that I claim your support. The ties of honour demand my exertions for the first ; those of Nature and affection for the last. I perceive the surprise,” added the Chevalier, “this acknowledgment has occasioned ; time will not admit of further explanation than that *the mother of Matilda was the sister of D’Armfeldt.*”

Astonishment, for a few instants, kept the
assembly

assembly silent ; at length the whole army, vying with each other in expressions of affection towards their beloved commander, unanimously demanded to be immediately led against the tyrant, whom they threatened with the most dreadful effects of their vengeance.

The result has already been related ; but as some explanation of the circumstances which occasioned the sudden and unaccountable terror of Albert may be necessary, we must accompany Theodore and the Count Von Werdenberg from the retreat of the latter to the place appointed by Berthold for the meeting of his followers.

The two heroes, leaving Matilda at the hermitage, under the protection of the faithful Hassan, and such other of the attendants who had been selected from the neighbouring peasantry, for their zeal and attachment to the Count Von Werdenberg, proceeded to join the troops. Their road lay through the forest which Theodore had
before

before traversed, at the time when he escaped from the custody of the banditti ; it was not quite two days march from the sequestered habitation of the Count to its entrance ; but although the atmosphere was peculiarly favourable to them, as Nature seemed to have assumed her most fascinating aspect, yet the travellers perceived that, notwithstanding all their exertions, they should not be able to gain its farthest extremity before the approach of night. Unwilling to pass the hours of darkness in so gloomy a situation, they determined to halt at some little distance from its entrance. A few oaks, that seemed by their size to vie with the date of creation itself, appeared to promise them a sufficient shelter ; scarce had they arrived at their intended place of rest, than the last tinge of day faded to the eye, and a total darkness would have ensued, had not the friendly moon bestowed her modest rays upon the surrounding scene. Prudence, however, forbade the encouragement of sleep, as
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they knew not what dangers they might encounter. It was well known that the emissaries of Albert were dispersed in various directions, and it was evident, by the circumstance of Matilda's rescue, that they had penetrated to within a small distance of the Count's retreat. In open day, neither the Count or Theodore dreaded either equal or superior numbers ; but they justly deemed it madness to run the risk of putting themselves in the power of an enemy, whose malice would be amply gratified by the acquisition of a prize so valuable.

Theodore expressed so much satisfaction at this arrangement, as occasioned the Count to rally him upon the subject, jocosely observing, that he seemed more fearful of encountering the gloom of a forest, than he would an host of enemies. " My Lord," replied Theodore, in the same tone, " had you experienced an adventure similar to that which befel me at the time I was journeying through it after my escape from the caverns of the banditti, I believe
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you would give the preference to the light of the sun, rather than to that of its sister planet, although indeed it was scarcely past mid-day when the occurrence I alluded to happened."

On this remark, the Count, to whom Theodore had never communicated the particulars of his escape, suggested that he should be happy to hear the narrative of his proceedings, from the time of his leaving the cavern, where he had been so long detained, until his departure from Clagenfurth, after his interview with Albert; for that, although he was acquainted with the general result, yet, as he judged from the observation just made, that many interesting facts were unknown to him, the relation would beguile the tedious hours of night, and effectually prevent their giving way to the allurements of repose. With this request, Theodore readily complied, by repeating the particulars already given in his first interview with Albert; he also mentioned the circumstance of the original prophecy

phesy respecting that Prince, and his subsequent extraordinary behaviour, which Sternheim, who had privately obtained the intelligence, had related to him in confidence ; nor did he consider the retailing of it to the Count as any breach of honour, having been accustomed, ever since his first introduction, to esteem him as a father ; besides, he well knew the high honour of his auditor, and that, if the occurrence was improper to be divulged, it was as secure in his breast as in his own.

During the narrative, the Count was variously affected ; yet the darkness of the night, feebly illumined by the pallid rays of the moon, sufficiently screened him from the observation of Theodore, who, at the conclusion, observing that the former appeared deep in meditation, kept a respectful silence.

The mind of the Count Von Werdenberg was as little tinctured with superstition as that of most men of his age ; indeed, his natural good sense, aided by a more liberal education than usually fell to the lot
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of mankind in general, proved a barrier of strength sufficient to repel the implicit confidence of belief in those supernatural agents, who abounded throughout the whole continent. The variety of scenes likewise in which he had been engaged, where he had frequently experienced the fallacy of these predestinations, confirmed that judgment respecting them, which his own reason had previously approved. But although these were the real sentiments of the Count, yet he was aware that the general opinion, and more particularly among the lower ranks, militated against them; he deemed it therefore true policy, notwithstanding his own incredulity, to take every advantage that might be derived from the weakness of others, especially when in a state of hostility.

At length, the Count breaking the silence which he had maintained for some time after the conclusion of Theodore's narrative, observed, that the circumstances he had mentioned might, if judiciously acted upon,
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be productive of great advantages in the approaching contest, though he should defer drawing any conclusions from them until they joined Berthold.

The remainder of the night passed away in the discussion of various subjects analogous to their present expedition ; and the heart of Theodore expanded with the glorious prospect of being the destined avenger of injured innocence ; while his companion, deeply skilled in the knowledge of the human heart, judiciously fanned the flame, without suffering it to burst the bounds prescribed by the cautious maxims of prudence.

The balsamic vapours of night were still in conflict with the rising heat of the rosy morning, when the two warriors set forward to meet the brave companions allotted for the intended enterprize. They soon arrived at the skirts of the well-known forest ; and notwithstanding all his prior resolution, the Count could not help confessing to Theodore, that he felt an unaccountable awe impressed upon his mind, dissimilar

to any he had ever before experienced ; “indeed,” continued he, “I almost wish your prophetic sibyl may not honour you with a second invitation.” Theodore made no answer, but seemed anxiously exploring every opening the almost impervious underwood afforded, in order to guard against surprise.

Several hours had passed, when, arriving at a spot more free from impediment than any which they had hitherto met with, they agreed to rest, and take some refreshment : by the few observations they were enabled to make, they conjectured that they were nearly in the centre of the forest ; but as Theodore had formerly entered it in a different direction, he could not ascertain whether he was near the spot where he had before been accosted by his supernatural visitant. Scarcely had they began their frugal repast, when the sun, which had hitherto shone with unusual splendour, as if satisfied with having conducted them through the various intricacies of

of the forest to that destined spot, suddenly became immersed in a dark impenetrable cloud, while the sable foliage, by which they were surrounded, producing at intervals a moaning sound, contributed to the horrors of the overspreading gloom. Theodore cast an expressive look upon the Count, and in a voice scarce raised above a whisper, observed, that the present appearances coincided with those he recollected to have preceded the approach of the mysterious female.

The Count, who had been struck with the sudden alteration, maintained a calm but expressive silence; he seemed preparing to arm himself with fortitude to encounter a scene, hitherto condemned by his reason and belief; and also, with a determination to detect, if possible, any imposition that might be attempted to be practised, either upon himself or his companion. In a few minutes the sound of approaching footsteps were heard; and the warriors, ignorant of the intention of the intruders,

hastily snatched up their arms, which lay beside them, and prepared, if necessary, for resistance. Their alarm of hostile intentions, however, was not of long continuance; as Theodore, casting his eyes upon the right, observed his former friend approaching toward them, with a slow and measured step. He immediately pointed her out to the Count, who, although in some degree prepared for such an interview, could not avoid starting when she first attracted his notice; neither was Theodore less surprised, as her appearance was far different than when she before had accosted him; and for a few moments he doubted whether he was not mistaken. On his prior interview, her gait seemed weakened by age, and her body bent by infirmities, while the stick, with which she moderated her steps, appeared the most necessary appendage; but now, her form was erect, her tread firm and even; and although the furrows of age were visible in her countenance, still her aspect was commanding,
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her eye fierce and penetrating, as if capable of discovering secrets deposited within the inmost recesses of the heart. A broad zone, on which many hieroglyphic characters were depicted, confined her loosely-flowing garments around her waist, while a purple band gave some restraint to those tresses which, though white by age, descended in ringlets upon her shoulders, the sport of those undulating breezes that casually penetrated through the interstices of the surrounding foliage; added to this, an ebon wand, of more than ordinary length and thickness, upon the top of which appeared a banner of black silk, closely rolled up, graced her right hand, and supplied the place, for form only, of the humble and discarded crook: as she advanced, each felt an awe, which he found it impossible to shake off or overcome, and which prevented them from giving utterance to their thoughts. Without noticing, however, their visible confusion, the antient crone approached the circle where they had been

sitting, and looking upon both with an air, which, though stern, was far from being indicative of displeasure, exclaimed, in a tone which enforced obedience, "*Follow me.*" For a moment the Count hesitated, yet instantly feeling ashamed of his indecision, waved his hand as a signal of acquiescence. Their mysterious visitor seemed pleased at their ready compliance, and as complacently as her features would admit, gave a smile of approbation. Having proceeded a little way, Theodore recognized the path which he had formerly trod upon a similar occasion, and he made an observation to the Count to that purpose. The latter, however, placed his finger upon his lips, indicating a wish to remain silent. In fact, at that instant, the mind of the Count was a chaos of confusion; he felt himself a principal actor in a scene, the authenticity of which he had ever more than doubted; yet now, for the first time, his faith was staggered: he was convinced there could be no collusion. Theodore had disclosed
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his story to him, but a few hours before, and in consequence, had given rise to an expectation of their experiencing some similar adventure, and this idea was now, in all probability, on the point of being fulfilled. Such were the thoughts that floated in rapid circulation over the mind of the Count; and he had scarcely adopted the determination of being guided in his future conduct by existing circumstances, when they arrived at the entrance of their conductor's abode.

As some description has already been given of it, we shall at once introduce our travellers into the interior; and if the Count was surprised at the objects which he had observed upon his approach thither, that surprise was heightened to astonishment, when he surveyed the uncouth furniture which decorated the apartment into which they were conducted; nor did the figure of its mistress less engage his attention; it was in vain that he wished to view her with disgust; there was a commanding

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appearance,

appearance, which, notwithstanding all his prejudice, involuntarily attracted his attention, and forced him to regard her with awe and respect.

As yet the silence had not been broken ; their hostess pointing to two chairs, which were placed near a three-legged table, of an uncouth form, seemed to indicate her wish for their being seated, a hint that was immediately complied with ; and although she had found them regaling themselves in the forest, yet she placed before them some viands of a superior quality, together with a cordial well calculated to raise the spirits of the depressed. Little hesitation was made by either to partake of the cheer before them, as they had, when interrupted, by no means completed their meal ; and the Count following the example of Theodore, who had formerly experienced the efficacy of the liquid which the stone bottle before them contained, and which he readily conjectured was of a similar quality, found his spirits not only considerably composed
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by the cordial beverage, but also invigorated.

During the time in which they were engaged in partaking of the pleasures of the table, their mysterious hostess had frequently left them undisturbed ; they, however, took no further advantage of her absence, than examining with a more minute attention the eccentric furniture by which they were surrounded. At length, perceiving her guests had concluded their repast, the hoary sibyl, after removing the remains, the choice particles of which fell to the share of her constant attendant, the black cat, already mentioned, took her seat at the head of the table, where an elbow-chair of most curious workmanship had been placed for her reception. It was composed of yew ; the front legs were formed to represent serpents, and were joined to the arms in such a manner, as that the two extremities should form their heads, from which flames of fire were supposed to issue. Various plants and implements, used in incan-

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tations,

tations, were embossed upon different parts, particularly upon the back, upon the top of which, exactly in the centre, stood the figure of a raven, as large as life, painted black, and with wings extended from one side to the other, to each of which it was fastened by a chain of gold ; but the circumstance which chiefly rivetted the attention was, that through the body of this figure appeared an arrow, while the head of the bird, inclining towards its breast, indicated its dying state. On her left sat the favourite already mentioned, which frequently purring, seemed to demand the attention of its mistress.

For the superior form in which they were now received, to that which he had experienced upon a former occasion, Theodore judged they were indebted to the quality of the Count Von Werdenberg, till reflecting a moment, he discarded the hasty-conceived idea, it being, he deemed, impossible, even for her art, great as it might be, to obtain the knowledge of a person, long

supposed the inhabitant of another world. Bewildered in conjecture, however, of what might prove the issue of this adventure, the two warriors gazed in silence ; for so awe-struck were their tongues, that they dared not venture the inquiry for what purpose they were detained from prosecuting their journey, but awaited in anxious expectation of being addressed by the personage in whose presence they were. Their conductress perceived their perplexity, and hastened to relieve it. " Henry Count Von Werdenberg," began this mysterious being.

At this appellation both Theodore and the Count started with evident surprise, the latter particularly felt the force of being recognized by one so totally a stranger ; the circumstance, however, made a deep impression upon his mind, and more readily prepared it for a belief in her supernatural agency. " Count Von Werdenberg," repeated the sibyl, " the time long predestined is rapidly approaching, when the sorrows by which the houses of Von Wer-

denberg and De Mountfort have been long oppressed, shall vanish as the mist before the rising sunbeams, and give place to joy and happiness. Many, however, are yet the hardships to be borne, and the perils to be undergone. Fear not, however, the machinations of the wicked, but patiently tread the paths of honour and virtue. These, though covered with thorns and brambles, will ultimately conduct you to the temple of real enjoyment. To you, Count, I more particularly address myself; and let not the incredulity you have so long professed respecting the superior knowledge allowed to favoured mortals, prejudice your opinion so much as to prevent your taking advantage of such means which Fortune places, through my hands, in your power, as the primary steps to attain the promised felicity. Dare only to trust assertion—the completion will ensure belief. Still I perceive a smile of derision on your features; and I might be tempted to withdraw my assistance and protection,

tion, did not superior motives urge me forward."

"I confess," replied the Count, venturing, for the first time, to interrupt her, "that hitherto I have been an infidel in respect to the powers possessed by those of your description; but let me here acknowledge, that although my reason is not entirely convinced, yet I have experienced circumstances of so extraordinary and incomprehensible a nature, within these few hours, as materially to shake my opinion; and I can safely promise, if not implicitly to believe, at least implicitly to follow your advice and directions."

"Enough," rejoined the sibyl; "we cannot expect opinions formed in our earlier years, and growing with our growth, to be changed so very hastily. You, Theodore, have already been pronounced the avenger of injured innocence. The time is now arrived; the oppressed Adeline, the orphan Matilda, demand you as the minister of vengeance; but while this glorious task
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is assigned to your youthful valour, it belongs to the Count Von Werdenberg to temperate, by his superior judgment, that ardour so natural to youth, and which, if not properly modulated, may degrade itself to brutal ferocity. Reflect upon the character of the once highly-favoured Albert; how noble, how heroic it shone, until blasted by one fatal passion, he fell from the dazzling height, and from the hero became the tyrant. Let the scene you formerly witnessed in this cottage be ever present to your mind; so shall your just revenge be tempered with mercy to the fallen."

The exhortation of this mystic being sunk deep into the minds both of Theodore and the Count; the more they heard, the more their wonder increased. It was evident that she was minutely acquainted with the most secret transactions both of the families of Werdenberg and De Mountfort, and seemed to feel a peculiar interest in their welfare; sensible of this, the Count felt an eager desire of knowing something
more

more concerning her, and was almost tempted to ask her by what means she had become acquainted with facts so correctly as she appeared to be; but a dread of incurring her displeasure, at the moment when she had offered her assistance, prevented him. A question, however, hazarded by Theodore, brought about the wished-for explanation. The name of Matilda electrified the heart of the young hero, who abruptly demanded if she knew that lovely maid? A look, which penetrated to the recesses of his heart, told him that he had betrayed the secret enclosed within it; no answer, however, was returned to his demand, but, addressing them both, the sibyl observed, that as their intended expedition would be rather benefited than injured by the delay, she would shew the high confidence which she placed in them, by disclosing some particulars of her past life, which would probably not only induce them to give greater credit to her actions, but, at the same time, prove the

the interest which she took in every thing that concerned the two houses, whose principals she was then addressing. The Count and Theodore bowed a willing assent to this proposal, each extremely anxious to hear the history of a person who had become so interesting to them; she accordingly began her narrative in the following manner:—

“ In order to give a correct account of myself, I must revert to a very early period of my existence, or perhaps it may be more proper to precede that period by a few years. My father was a native of the Tyrol; his name I shall pass over in silence; or if, in the course of my tale, I should have occasion to designate him, shall conceal it under that of Theobald. He was, although in a very distant line, of the purest order of nobility, which had been kept up with such scrupulous exactness, as not to have experienced the disgrace of one blot for many generations. Alas! it was destined to receive the first stain from him.

I must

I must premise, that although noble, he was poor; and some excesses which he had been guilty of, reaching the ears of the Prince in whose service he was engaged, he was dismissed with ignominy. His sword was his sole dependance; deprived of that, he was an isolated being, without a friend, or the means of procuring bread. Nature had, however, formed him of materials that forbade despair; and he flattered himself, that although he had forfeited the protection of one Prince, yet that there were many who would employ him, as he did not conceive that his disgrace was made known further than the limits of that empire whose soldier he had been: with a light heart, therefore, and as light a purse, he left his native country, determined to travel as far as possible from the scene of his misfortunes, before he entered into any service: he was sensible that his person and address would recommend him; his education had been superior to most young men of his age; and in one particular science,

ence, in which he took an uncommon delight, he excelled in an eminent degree; this was astrology. Rich in these few accomplishments, he doubted not but that he should be able to fabricate a story sufficiently plausible to account for having left his own country, and seeking employment elsewhere. Having, however, passed through various principalities in Germany, and other European sovereignties, without meeting with that encouragement which he had expected, he determined to proceed into Asia. The Court of Persia was the place upon which he fixed to try his fortune, where, after encountering innumerable difficulties, he at length arrived in safety. As he judged, his commanding figure and address soon attracted the notice of one of the generals in the Persian service, who, happy in the opportunity of procuring an European officer, soon gave him a command. As that empire was then engaged in a war with Turkey, he immediately took the field, and in a casual encounter
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with a superior party of the enemy, was wounded and left for dead. No sooner was the field of battle cleared from the combatants, than the neighbouring peasantry, who make plunder their sole aim, sallied forth to see what harvest they could make from the destruction of their fellow-creatures. It is needless for me to describe such scenes to the warriors I am now addressing, whose hearts I well know condemn, though they cannot prevent the savage practice. Fortunately for my father, he was perceived by a female, whose heart was not entirely destitute of humanity; she had been attracted by the glittering ornaments which he wore, which, by anticipation, she already deemed her own; when, hastily beginning to undress him, she perceived that he still breathed. Every idea of plunder was instantly annihilated, and she became anxious only to procure him assistance. Fortune favoured her benevolent wishes, as she discovered one of her companions at no great distance, whose help

help she requested. She knew, that within a quarter of a mile lived one of the disciples of the great Zoroaster, whose skill in all the various branches of the medicinal art was the theme of the surrounding villages ; neither was his benevolence less celebrated : to this hospitable retreat she determined to convey the wounded sufferer, which, after much difficulty, she accomplished, and was received by the venerable hermit, for so he might be called, with that kindness and affability which were his well-known characteristics. My father's wounds, although deep, were not mortal, and by the care and skill of his generous physician, he was soon enabled to converse with ease and freedom. Perhaps the attention of a third person contributed in some measure to his cure ; this was a niece of his host, who had been brought up by him, and had been early initiated into those mysterious sciences known only to the pupils of their great master Zoroaster. I have before mentioned that my father was
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an enthusiast in astrology ; you may therefore readily conceive his happiness, when he found himself at the fountain-head of knowledge, and heard the principles of the science he so much loved commented upon and explained, in a manner infinitely more conclusive than he had any idea of. Nor did the science decrease in his estimation, by being daily elucidated by the arguments of a lovely female, in all the bloom of youth and beauty. In fine, my father loved, and, after some preliminary explanations, was made happy by an union with his adored Almira. For a few moments, the dignity of birth, and the hitherto unsullied line of the family tie, made him shrink from the inequality ; but when he considered that he was already deemed an alien to that family, and was for ever incapacitated from returning to his native country, he unreluctantly determined to sacrifice all other considerations to the enjoyment of the society of a sage whom he esteemed, and of a virtuous female, for whom he entertained

tained a sincere affection, which was as sincerely returned. Previous to the celebration of the marriage, it had been determined that my father should give up his commission, and be initiated into that sacred society, of which the hermit was a conspicuous member. This was the height of his ambition, and he looked forward with eager expectation to the hour when, at their annual grand meeting, he should be introduced to those celebrated sages of the East, and be received as one of their society. This event accordingly took place soon after my birth, a circumstance which occasioned great rejoicings.

“ Although the difficulties were great before he was thought sufficiently enlightened in their mysterious sciences, so as to be admitted to the arcana, yet, by perseverance, and his complete knowledge of astronomy, he surmounted them with a rapidity that astonished his brethren. In respect to myself, as soon as the first dawn of reason began to appear, the utmost care

was

was taken to direct my mind to those sciences I was the daily witness of; you cannot therefore be surprised, that under such tuition, and with a genius that in the earlier stage promised to be of the most comprehensive nature, I should imbibe with avidity the very essence of those sciences which were the sole study of my preceptors. Indeed, before I had attained the age of fourteen, the whole process of those rites in which the Egyptians had become so celebrated, and which had been handed down to the Persian magi in all their purity of form, were as familiar to me as the more common occurrences of life; and I was frequently employed upon the most solemn occasions, in the performance of those various incantations, which, by the ordinances of the society, were repeated at particular seasons. Years passed away unmarked by any material circumstance; nor was the happiness of the family broken in upon, until the decease of my grandfather paved the way for future sorrows: this event was

shortly

shortly after followed by the death of both my parents ; and in the course of five short years, I found myself deserted and alone. My constant employment at that time was to officiate as the priestess in the principal temple, where the religion of Zoroaster was maintained in all its pomp and splendour. This relieved my mind from that ennui which might otherwise have proved the bane of my existence, and at length have incapacitated me from necessary exertion. But although this mode of life was almost habitual to me, and indeed congenial to my feelings, as it gave me the opportunity of practising the mysterious science I had made myself mistress of in so eminent a degree, yet I sometimes found a restlessness in my disposition, which at first I could scarcely account for, but which increased almost imperceptibly, to so great a height as to render me almost dissatisfied with my situation. I must observe, that when seated with his family around him, my father would frequently
describe

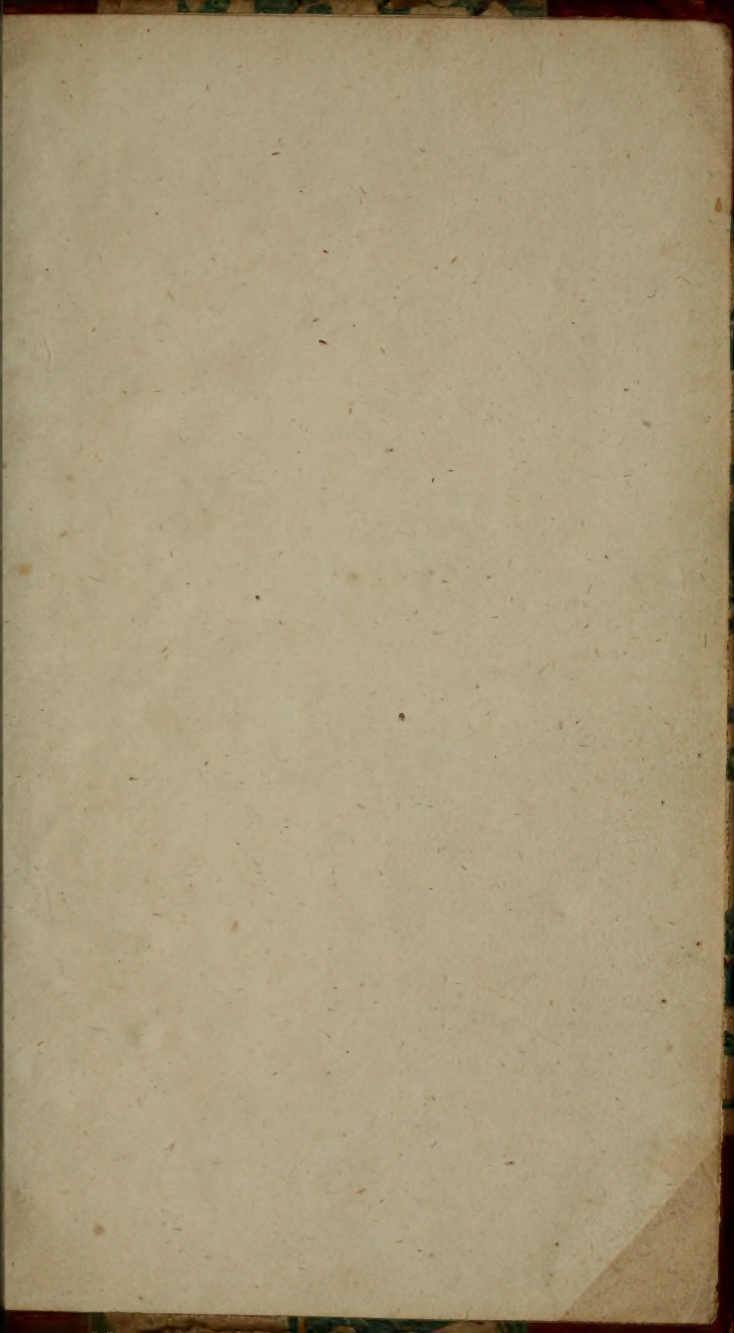
describe the manners and customs of the Europeans ; and my grandfather, who was curious to gain some knowledge of nations so distant, some of whose names he had never heard of, generally made it the topic of his discourse. It is true, I listened with avidity to the description, but without the smallest wish or idea of ever taking advantage of the knowledge I gained. The history of his own family was also related ; yet, though the description of their antiquity, their power, and their riches, was grand, still it occasioned no desire in my mind to partake or be a witness of it, feeling myself more happy and contented within my small domestic circle, than in a crowd of pretended friends, or overbearing and haughty relatives. My sentiments, however, seemed to have undergone a total revolution ; and I eagerly longed to visit those countries I had heard described by the partial representation of a parent. A disturbance which took place just at the time when my mind was agitated, and fluctuating

ting in opinion, concerning my future prospects, determined me; and as you, Count Henry, was in some measure the cause of it, and indeed peculiarly interested in it, I shall relate it more particularly."

END OF VOL. II.







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